

Waif-o-the-Sea

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY



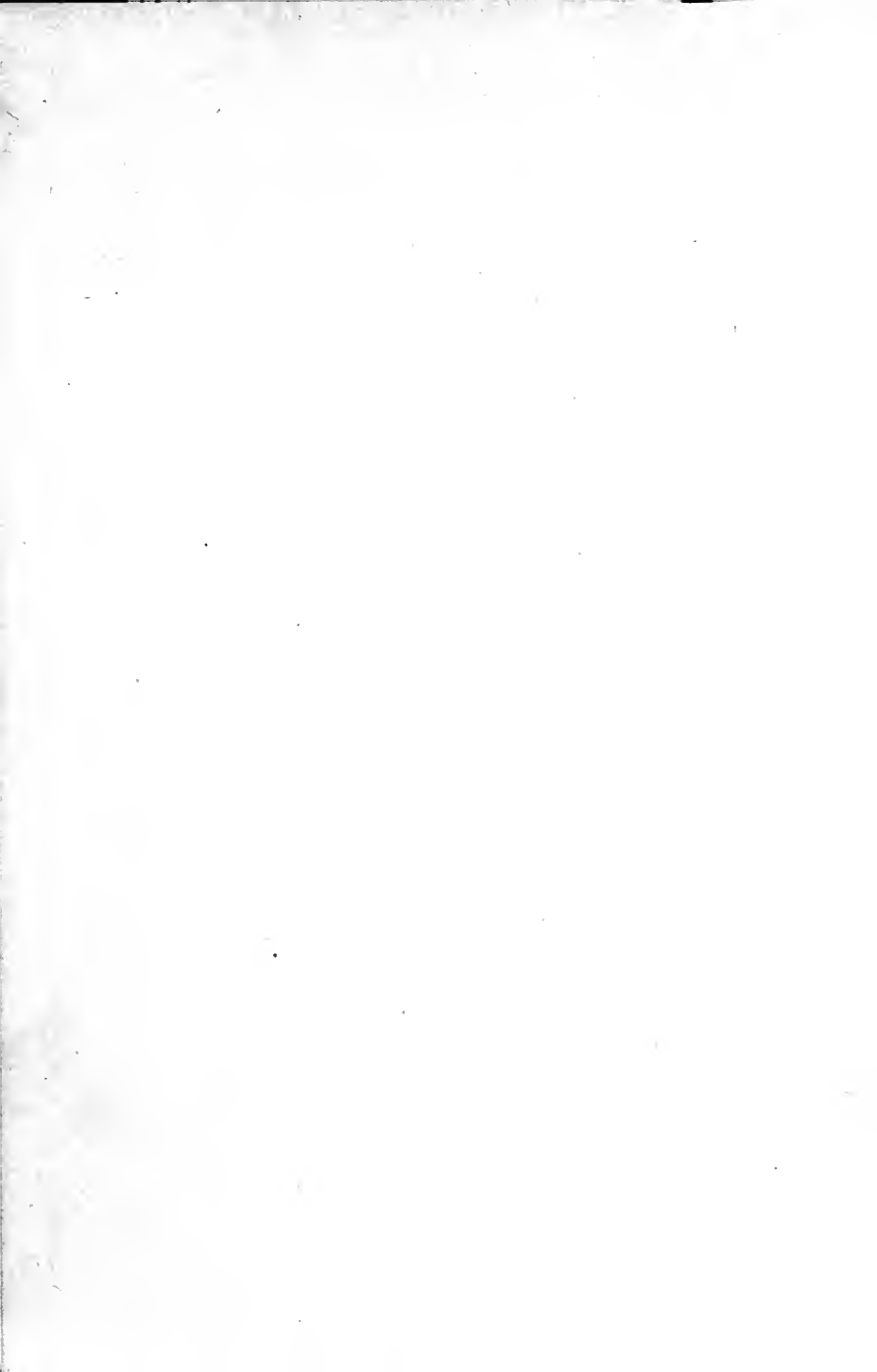


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WAIF-O-THE-SEA



He expected any moment to see a black face out-thrust from
the open window

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WAIF-O-THE-SEA

A Romance of the Great Deep

BY

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

Author of that Group of Island Stories, to wit:
The Island of Regeneration, The Island of Surprise,
The Island of the Stairs, and Other Novels of the
South Seas, Including *By the World Forgot*

ILLUSTRATED BY

J. ALLEN ST. JOHN



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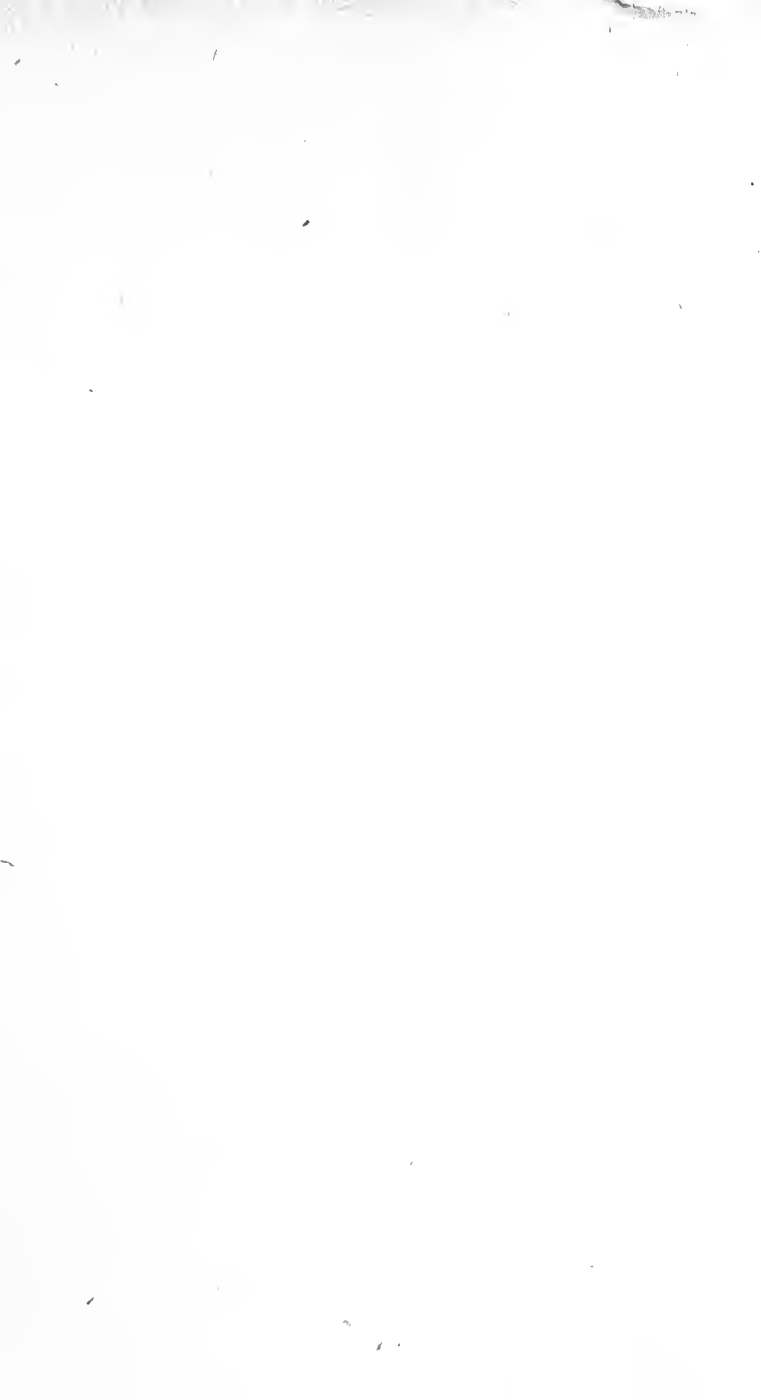
ALBERT E. SMITH

Good Fighter and Good Friend
Companion in many a bold venture

I dedicate this story

Confident that the many generations of the hardy
seamen of the Cinque Ports he numbers in
his ancestry will make him love the
sound of the sea in it, as
I do myself.

957359



PREFACE

THIS story lies between two truths. As I look at that statement, whose form and substance are alike unpremeditated I do assure you, it appears to me that I am jesting with my readers and myself. To the obvious *double entendre* I will not plead guilty, since I did not intend it.

What I mean is that the account of the mutiny on the *Sharon* with which the story begins is literally true. Strange as it may seem, difficult as it may be to believe, it all really happened, only it was another ship.

Equally true is the account of the amazing adventure of the admiral in cutting out the *Esmeralda*, the very identical name of that ship by the way, with which the novel ends. Now you see what I really meant.

Also characterized by the same scrupulous adherence to fact are old Broadrib's reminiscences of his famous commander. In life the veteran harpooner would certainly have embellished his yarns a bit. I have restrained him, even at the risk of failing to draw a real sailor, to the truth.

As for the rest of the romance it is not difficult to parallel it in the actual experiences of the time. And I hope the reader may be willing to endorse that Italian proverb which runs,

Si non e ver e ben trovato.

And perhaps after he gets to know Audrey, that

Preface

Waif-o-the-Sea, as I know her now, to say nothing of Captain Clough, the admiral and the harpooner, he or she may wish to hear more of their adventures. Romance did not end with their marriage. Other things happened to them and perhaps I shall chronicle more of their adventures in some future volume.

C. T. B.

The Hemlocks, Park Hill,
Yonkers, N. Y., April, 1918.

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WAIF-O-THE-SEA

CHAPTER I

THE SHARON LOSES HER CAPTAIN

“**R**EY,” shouted the captain.

The boy had been lounging over the wheel. The ship needed but little watching in the light, fitful air prevailing. A light touch on the spokes from time to time kept her head before it as she lazily drifted forward through the long smooth rollers. Of course, if there had been any sea running or any wind blowing the slender, rather delicate youngster alone would scarcely have been equal to the task of steering the big whaler, although in point of knowledge Rey McRae, the captain's nephew, was as good a sailor as there was on the ship. He never discussed his age, but he had the appearance of a fourteen-year-old lad, with the wit and wisdom of more years than that.

A year and a half had passed since the fine new whaler, *Sharon*, had cleared from New Bedford for a cruise in the South Pacific after sperm, and the time had been very advantageously employed by the ambitious boy, especially since he had enjoyed the especial attention and the able teaching of Mr. Benjamin Clough, the young third mate.

Although there was no occasion for it, the captain's

voice rang very sharp. Captain Howes Norris, of Holmes Hole, was possessed of a rough tongue. He had a habit of brusque, peremptory, exacerbating speech, much to the irritation of his men and with serious results to himself, as we shall see.

As the call came to him from abreast of the foremast whither the captain had gone Rey straightened up at once. He had learned that it was always well to be on the alert when the captain spoke, albeit the shipmaster was his sole and only relation and guardian.

"Sir?" he answered promptly with the official formality of the ship's routine.

"Take a turn with a rope about the wheel to keep it steady, and jump aloft to the main to'gall'nt yard and keep your eye on those boats. It's growing rather hazy to wind'ard. I don't want to lose sight of them."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the boy, rapidly lashing the wheel lightly and then springing into the main rigging, up which he ran with the agility of a cat.

There was no smarter light yardman on the ship than Rey McRae. There his slight build stood him in good stead. Disdaining the lubber's hole, he scrambled over the futtock shrouds and soon the rigging that led to the crosstrees of the main topmast was shaking under his flying feet. So long as he was not mastheaded for punishment—a common enough practice in those days—Rey always enjoyed being aloft. He possessed a cool head, an unerring foot, and a stout heart. He swung himself up on the topgallant yard, clasped the royal mast with his left hand and shading his bright eyes with his hand, stared up to windward.

"See anything of them?" shouted the captain from the weather side of the forecastle.

"Yes, sir, see 'em plain," answered the boy promptly.

"Well?" came from the deck.

"The mate's boat's fast to a big whale and they are towing her back toward the ship."

"And the other boat?"

"She's going to help Mr. Brace tow, I think, sir."

From his lofty position on the main topgallant yard, the youngster could see over and through the light haze spreading over the sea which rather obscured the view from the deck. The sky was still clear above, but on the horizon it was thickening a little, and before he went forward Captain Norris had noticed that the glass was falling rather rapidly.

"That's good," said the captain. "Lay down from aloft now and take the wheel again."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the boy.

He stood up on the yard and reached out for the main royal back-stay. He disdained, as slow and unseamanlike, the ordinary method of descending from his dizzy perch by means of the shrouds. He purposed to slide down the back-stay to the deck in short order.

As he leaned over and grasped the back-stay preparatory to stepping off the yard and clasping his legs around it for his long slide, he stopped a moment for a glance at the deck beneath him.

There were but four men on the *Sharon's* deck. The captain, who had left the forecastle but who had not returned to the quarter deck, had stopped on his way aft. Just forward of the try-pots he had climbed up

on the starboard rail, steadying himself to the slow roll of the whaler by a hand on the after swifter of the fore shrouds. The captain, the other men on the deck, with the boy aloft, were the only human beings left on the ship; even the cook had gone in the mate's boat. The three other men were natives of the South Seas. They were extreme types of the Papuan or Negroid Islanders of the South Pacific; very black, very stupid, very brutal, and very strong. Their ugly countenances indicated savage ferocity, and although they had come from a Micronesian island of the Kingsmill group, they were of the lowest Melanesian type. Among the many Micronesians of the Gilbert Islands were some hybrids, of a very mixed breed indeed. Sometimes the brown skinned, better featured, better formed, high grade Polynesian or Micronesian type predominated; sometimes, as in this instance, the reverse was the case. There were, it was evident, not three worse men in appearance, or character, in the Pacific, afloat or ashore.

Finding his ship becoming short handed after a chapter of accidents and mischances, Captain Norris had of necessity taken the first men that offered. Indeed, it had been difficult to get anybody at all in those then unfrequented seas. Therein he had made a serious mistake, for these black villains were poor sailors—nothing could ever teach these Melanesians the way of a ship, and except where brute strength could be unskilfully applied they were utterly worthless. Too late was it discovered that they could not be taught to steer and that nothing on earth, neither threat, nor

appeal, nor command would induce them to go aloft. They could haul away lustily at a sheet or a halliard, and one of them at least had learned to pull an oar after a fashion, but that was all. They could neither hand, nor reef, nor steer.

It would not have been safe to leave the *Sharon*, which was a big ship for her day, of seven hundred tons and upwards, under the care of three savages, a boy and the captain had not the weather been so mild, the wind so light, and the sea so smooth.

When she cleared from New Bedford it had been with the shouts of the admiring populace of the little seaport town and many good wishes for "greasy luck," as the sailors' phrase went. Those wishes had been wonderfully fulfilled in the year and a half of her cruising in the South Seas. For nearly every barrel of the three thousand or more on board was filled with whale oil, the best sperm oil at that, and the hold was crowded with the by-products of the whale fishery, so called, including some huge lumps of priceless ambergris they had chanced upon.

Captain Norris intended to discharge the islanders at some convenient island which he might pass, make his way to the west coast of South America, replenish provisions and water, recruit a crew if possible, and then sail for home.

That afternoon a school of sperm whales had been sighted and he had put over two boats, all that his short-handed condition would warrant him manning, in order, if possible, to fill the very last receptacles still remaining empty on the ship. They had got one big

bull whale, which was now lashed along the port side, and had gone back for another. When these two had been tried out it would be square away for South America, then around the Horn for home.

Everybody left on the ship was in good spirits. For one reason, the original crew of twenty-nine men all told, including Captain Norris at one end of the articles and his nephew Rey at the other, had been reduced to eleven white men and six natives, two splendid Polynesians, and the four Kingsmillers. Ten of the sailors, irked by the captain's iron hardness, deserted the ship at Ascension Island in the Caroline group. The natives, who were not averse to having such an addition to their population, had concealed them, and Norris, although he searched diligently, had been unable to find them. Of the nineteen other white men, six had lost their lives in the dangers incident to attacking sperm whales, one had been left at Valparaiso ill, another had deserted the ship at Rio de Janeiro.

Of course, the heirs of those who had died on the cruise in the line of duty would be entitled to their full "lay," or share of the proceeds of the sale of the takings of the cruise. Whalemen were paid that way. They got a small salary and a share, or "lay" in proportion to their rank and rating in the ship, so that a whaling cruise was always a speculative proposition for all hands; a successful voyage meant good pay even for the ship's boy; an unsuccessful one brought even the captain little or nothing.

The deserters had, on the contrary, forfeited all claim to their share, which would make the portion of

those who had remained true to the ship, the larger. Of course the smaller the crew the harder the work, but after that day there would be no more whaling in the full ship and the men aboard could sail her home on a pinch.

Norris was a just man, a strict, hard disciplinarian, but he was not cruel and he was both a splendid seaman and an accomplished whaler. He had also something of the white man's arrogance toward the black or the brown man, which he was at little pains to conceal. After discovering the ineptitude, inefficiency and general worthlessness of the Kingsmill Islanders, he had borne hardly on them with a reckless disregard of consequences. He despised them, treated them little better than dogs, and they hated him as much as they feared him. It had not seemed to him to be dangerous to trust himself and the boy alone on the ship with these savages. He had probably never given a thought to any possible peril to himself or his nephew. If anybody had mentioned the risk he ran, he probably would have answered that he could handle all three of them himself. As a matter of fact, while the islanders were not and never would be seamen, they were as strong as bulls and they were not restrained by any scruples of any sort.

Seeing the captain, whom they hated, alone on the ship, the boats being now far away, without considering that a day of reckoning would certainly come, the savages decided to take advantage of the situation to wreak their vengeance upon the man. Indeed, taking their cue from Captain Norris, nearly everybody on the ship

treated them with contempt, a contempt which perhaps a sailor feels for inefficiency more than any other man, since the lives of all in a sailing ship depend upon the united ability and experience of the officers and crew more than in any other occupation.

Before he swung himself off the yard to descend the boy stared down at the deck a moment. Aft the ship was deserted, forward the captain stood. On the lee side, he saw the three islanders in a group.

The ship was saturated with whale oil, although Norris was a man who believed in cleanliness and carried his beliefs almost to an unwarranted limit, which was the greatest cause for grievance the sailors had with him. He was constantly trying to eradicate the evidences of their profession which impregnated the timbers; the men were continually scrubbing decks, yet the *Sharon* looked exactly what she was—a whaler reeking with oil. Everything—hull, rigging, masts, yards, sails—was permeated with whale oil and smelled of it vilely.

Mr. Clough, the third mate, who had served as a midshipman on a United States man-of-war in the late struggle with England and had there acquired a love for the spick-and-span neatness of the man-of-war's-man, also hated the inevitable greasiness of the whaler. And as Rey McRae swore by Mr. Clough, he experienced a little disgust at what he saw below him that afternoon. With a feeling of relief he looked away to the blue sea stretching unbrokenly on every hand, its rolling surface beginning to ripple in the slowly rising breeze. That moment of abstraction had the most dire

consequences, for when he turned his face to the deck again preparatory to descending, what he saw fairly froze his blood. Yet he was not so paralyzed with alarm as to be unable to make a sound, for he yelled loudly, if incoherently, with all his might in spite of his terror.

Such a shriek as that coming down from aloft startled the captain. He half turned, but it was too late. The biggest Melanesian, armed with a whaling spade, was right at the captain's back. Now a whaling spade is a long-handled implement that looks not unlike a common garden spade except its curved cutting or thrusting edge is sharp as a razor. It is a terrible weapon in a strong hand. The islanders were not good sailors, but they were experts in the use of any throwing or thrusting weapons, such as lance or spear.

Rey saw the flash of light on the polished weapon as the islander leaped up and lunged viciously at the captain. The thrust was delivered with terrific force and the edge caught the officer on the side of the neck. Captain Norris never lifted a hand, he never said a word or made a sound. The thrust was too quick, too sudden, too desperate. It is doubtful if he realized anything.

Rey closed his eyes for a second and when he opened them the captain was not there. His head almost severed from his body, Captain Norris had been driven overboard by the force of the blow. The islander, waving the bloody spade in his hands, was shouting madly. The other two were joining in a wild dance on the deck. So furious had been the blow that there was

not even a blood spot on the rail where the captain had stood.

For a moment Rey could scarcely believe that anything had happened. Except for the blood-stained spade and the shouting of the islanders he might have thought that he had dreamed it all.

Casting a glance to windward, however, he detected a dark body sinking out of sight as the ship slowly surged forward. The next instant, with a shudder, he recognized the black fin of a shark cutting the water. His uncle had been good to him, in the main, in a rough-and-ready sort of a way; he had been Rey's only relative and the boy was faint and sick with horror at the thought of his dreadful fate.

CHAPTER II

MR. CLOUGH WILL NOT ABANDON THE SHIP OR THE BOY

THIS awful tragedy had happened in much less time than it takes to tell it. Rey stood with his feet on the yard and his hand still clasping the stay. He trembled so with nervousness that he could scarcely keep his footing. He fought desperately against an overwhelming faintness. After that first cry he was as incapable of speech as of action. One of the islanders just then looked aloft and caught sight of him. He spoke to the others. They immediately stopped their dancing and shouting and stared up at him. One of the trio seized a harpoon and hurled it at the lad. Of course, it did not rise much higher than the main top far beneath him before it clattered to the deck. The boy was in no danger from that sort of weapon. They tried again. While the second shook his fist at him, the third man snatched a free belaying pin from the nearest life rail and threw it upward, but as before, unavailingly. Although he had given it a tremendous heave with his powerful black arm, it just touched the cross-trees below Rey's feet and fell harmlessly back to the deck.

No man had ever seen one of the islanders aloft, but that they might try to ascend the rigging and get him was, of course, possible. Would they make the attempt?

If so, what could he do? How could he escape? The appalled boy stared at them with a sickening anxiety and a growing apprehension, but after consulting together for a moment they separated. Evidently they had no present intention of climbing the rigging to get at him. Greatly relieved for the moment, Rey nevertheless watched them closely as they ran about the ship, fearful lest they might change their minds and try to take or kill him. It came to him at last to his great relief that they regarded him as a negligible quantity. Stupid as they were they knew he would have to come down from aloft for food and drink sooner or later, for if he did not he would grow so weak from hunger and exposure he would fall to the deck. He was only a boy anyway, and they had no fear of him or any anticipation that he would attack them.

Meanwhile they realized, of course, that the boats would soon be returning. Indeed, the slight mist had been lifted by a growing breeze to starboard and the boats were now in plain sight from the deck, though still a long way off. Rey divined that the savage mutineers were preparing to receive them. It was about one bell in the first dog watch, or half past four in the afternoon, and the season was early October, so that the day was already drawing to its close.

Uncertain for a moment as to what he ought to do, Rey continued to follow their movements, getting his nerve back in a measure as he realized that he was in no immediate danger. Their purpose was plain enough. They had gathered up all the whaling implements on the ship, lances, spears, harpoons, axes, together with

billets of wood and other missiles, and these they piled in convenient places forward and aft and along the bulwarks, or rails, so as to be ready for an attack by attempted boarding from the boats. As they did so, they kept up a great clatter in their own tongue with which Rey was entirely unfamiliar. In fact, so was everyone on the ship, communication with them being by signs and a few words, mostly profanity, which they had picked up from other whalers, except in the case of that one of them who was with the boats, and who could speak a little broken English.

The inaction was paralyzing to the boy. After he found that he himself was unmolested, it presently occurred to him that he ought to do something to warn the boats. They were still distant about a league from the ship, which they were approaching very slowly on account of the dead weight of the big whale they were towing, and Rey decided that they ought to be summoned back at once and at the same time warned if it were possible.

Neither of the three royals had been set, and as the surest way of attracting attention and showing that something was wrong, Rey decided to cut the main top-gallant halliards and let the yard fall on the crosstrees. He accordingly dropped down to the crosstrees himself, drew his sheath knife and cut the halliards. The yard came down with a run, the sail flopping and bellying out under the light breeze, making a great showing.

That would be seen, of course, from the boats, and any sailor would know that it was a sign that something was wrong unless the halliards had carried away because

they were defective and the officers of the ship would know that they were not. The yard made some noise as it fell, and the lazy flapping of the sail attracted the gaze for a moment of the men on the deck, but they paid no attention to it. It meant nothing to them. The boy noticed that they had stripped off their shirts and trousers and were busy streaking themselves with red paint which they had obtained in the storeroom.

Standing on the crosstrees Rey tried hard to think if there was anything else he could do. Happening to glance aft he caught sight of the ensign hanging quietly from the gaff of the spanker. If he could only get the flag! Captain Norris was very proud of his nationality and he generally had a small flag flying even at sea. It was easy enough to get into the mizzen top. Of course, the mizzen top would be much more accessible to the savages, being so much nearer to the deck than the main topmast crosstrees, but Rey decided the risk was worth the attempt. He remembered that not one of these islanders had ever been aloft and he did not think one of them would dare to try it now.

He could easily gain the mizzen topgallant yard by means of the mizzen topmast stay which, since the mizzen topmast was so much lower than the main, ran almost level between the two masts, the ascent from the main top being but a slight one, easily managed by any active boy.

Clasping his legs around the stay, quickly and quietly he climbed up hand over hand to the mizzen topmast. He did this, of course, without making any noise, and he gained the crosstrees entirely unobserved. The next

move was much easier. He only had to drop down to the end of the spanker gaff by means of the peak halliards, which held up the outer end of the spar, detach the flag, slide down the gaff to the mast, and climb up into the mizzen top by means of the throat halliards.

There was not a surer footed, clearer headed person on the ship than the boy. He would not have hesitated a second about such an achievement under ordinary circumstances, but with these bloodthirsty savages on the deck, it was quite another matter. However, he had come so far that he determined to go through the affair to the end.

He slid down the peak halliards to the boom, clasped his legs around it, cut the halliards to which the colors were bent, and seized the flag. Unfortunately, as he cut the flag halliards they fell to the deck and one of the islanders, happening to pass beneath, was struck on the shoulder by the falling line. He looked up and saw the boy. Of course, he did not for a moment understand what he was about or why he was in that position. But that made no difference.

Fortunately, he had no missile in his hand. It was the same savage who had used the whaling spade with such terrible effect on the poor captain and he still carried that weapon. With an acuteness for which he could have scarcely been given credit, he saw that the gaff, or boom, to which the boy clung was steadied by two ropes called vang's which led to either side of the ship.

Now Rey had not waited for anything. As soon as he got the flag in his hand he started down the boom toward the mast. He saw the islander perfectly. The

man's eyes followed the vang or stay down to the deck. He turned instantly and raised his spade. Rey knew what that meant. One vang or both being cut, the gaff would swing around wildly.

He was still about midway of the gaff. He had a few seconds to get to the mast. Somehow or other, holding the flag in his teeth, he got to his feet, and just as the whaling spade cut the vang and the boom gave a lurch, the boy clasped the peak halliards and slipped into the mizzen shrouds. The man who had cut the vang yelled as he did so, and he was instantly joined by the other two natives. One of them had an axe. He hurled it at the boy with terrific force and accurate aim. Some good angel just then caused Rey to move aside as he climbed to the top, this time through the lubber's hole for safety, and the blade only grazed his shoulder instead of hitting him fairly in the back of the neck, which would have meant his instant death.

The wound made by the axe was neither dangerous nor very deep, but it was painful and it bled profusely as he gained the shelter of the mizzen top. At the moment it only added a stimulus to the boy's energy if he needed any. His one thought was to get back to the main top, which was high and afforded him more safety than the mizzen; the latter being the shortest mast, the top was dangerously near the raised poop deck.

The savages were grouped aft staring and yelling. Then Rey resorted to a trick. He thrust his cap over the rail on the end of a belaying pin which he found in the top. It was instantly greeted with a shower of missiles. This kept the savages aft, for they expected

dumbly to see him again. While they were watching he had scrambled up to the crosstrees, and when they next caught sight of him, he was half way down the mizzen topmast stay which he had before ascended, and he was sliding down that stay for dear life the flag in his teeth. It was an easy thing for a well person, but for a frightened boy who had had the life almost scared out of him and who was bleeding from a wound in the left shoulder, it was a terrible undertaking. But desperate fear lent him a strength of which adverse conditions had sought to deprive him.

Although the savages ran forward and the air was filled with missiles, one of which, a beef bone, struck him on the back and bruised him but did not cause him to lose his hold, he gained the main top, panting, exhausted, bleeding, but otherwise unhurt. To clamber up to the main royal masthead and set the flag, Union down, was the work of a few moments. Then he slid down the mast to the crosstrees. He sat down on the topgallant yard, resting on the cap, clasped his legs around the mast, and sought with his neckerchief to bind up his wounded shoulder. It was almost an impossibility.

Fortunately, no artery had been cut and after a time, largely because he sat with his hand pressed against it, the wound stopped bleeding, but it rendered him quite helpless. His arm was stiff, it pained him frightfully, and he was so dizzy and giddy that it was with difficulty that he maintained his position on the yard.

The flag, Union down, always a signal of distress, told the men in the boats that something serious had

happened. They buoyed the whale, cast off the lines by which they were towing him, and drove the whale-boats rapidly toward the ship. The boats were rather short-handed, too, since the ship's complement had been so depleted by accident and desertion, but their crews made up in energy for what they lacked in numbers.

They approached the ship from slightly forward of the beam. The savages on the deck manifested an unusual degree of craft, for they crouched beneath the rail and gave no sign of their presence.

Feeling that he could hold on for but a little time longer, the boy was almost at the end of his resources. But he summoned his strength, and as the boats came within hailing distance he shouted a warning.

"Mr. Brace," he called. The first and second mates were New Bedford men, brothers, named Thomas and Nathan Brace respectively. Mr. Ben Clough, the third mate, was in the mate's boat forward. "Boat ahoy," shouted the boy again.

He thought he was shouting loudly, but the sound of his voice was singularly faint and weak. Yet in the light air they heard him distinctly enough.

"What is it? What has happened?" answered the mate.

"The savages have arisen and murdered the captain. They are in possession of the ship."

Without orders the men had stopped rowing at the sound of the first hail, but the boats had enough momentum to drive them ahead and they were now quite near the ship.

As the boy's voice died away, the three Papuans suddenly sprang up on the rail. They were armed with whaling spades, lances, or hatchets, according to their fancy.

"Hold water!" shouted Mate Brace in the nearest boat. "Back water hard! Stern all!"

The boat's way was checked as the men dug their oars in deep and then she was driven slowly astern as they backed hard. One of the men in the mate's boat was the fourth islander, a man called Billy. The sailors, finding it impossible to pronounce the names of the islanders, had named them in accordance with their fancy.

"You, Billy," said the mate pointing, "what do they say?"

Now Billy was more intelligent than the rest and knew more English. That was one reason why he had been distinguished by being permitted to pull an oar. He turned his head and shouted out something at his fellow-countrymen. A perfect torrent of words was poured out upon him. So soon as he could make himself heard, Billy turned to the mate.

"They got ship. Kill you. Same bad captain."

The islanders burst forth again.

"What now?" asked Mr. Brace as the tumult subsided.

"Want me come."

At that Mr. Clough picked up a harpoon and pointed it directly at the man's back. His meaning was perfectly obvious. Any treachery on Billy's part would be checked by a thrust of that weapon. The savage

shook his head. A cry of rage broke from the men on the ship and the next instant one of them hurled an axe over the waters with such force and skill that but for the fact that Billy saw it coming over his shoulder and ducked, it would have killed him. As it was, it struck the side of the boat, making a large gash extending down nearly to the water's edge.

The men needed no urging to put distance between them and the ship after that. Before they got the boat moving, however, Mr. Clough stood up in the fore sheets and threw his harpoon with all his force and skill. The distance was too great and the harpoon, making a graceful curve in the air, struck the side of the ship below the rail. It stuck there quivering. The natives yelled derisively.

"If you will put me a little nearer, Mate," said Mr. Clough fiercely, "I will put a harpoon through one of them."

"It is not to be thought of," said Brace, turning very pale. "If that axe had gone a foot lower, it would have gone through the bottom of the boat and she would have sunk."

By this time the two boats had got a safe distance from the ship. The air still continued light and the ship wobbled along, backing and filling, coming to and falling off in aimless, erratic fashion, making no way except a slow drift to leeward through the water. One of the mutineers had cast off or cut the wheel lashing, and the ship was under no control at all.

"I guess there is no doubt about the captain being dead," said the second mate to his brother, as the two

boats came to rest again, "therefore, you are in command, Tom."

Now Thomas Brace was undoubtedly in command, but he was plainly unequal to the situation. Ordinarily brave enough, the sight of those bloodthirsty, red-streaked savages, who had now stripped themselves except for breech cloths, and who were evidently drunk with blood, appalled him. As a matter of fact, counting out the fourth Kingsmiller and the two Polynesians, there were but nine white men in the two boats.

"There is nothing to do," said Mr. Clough at last, seeing nobody else suggested anything, "but to row up to the ship on each side, board her, and take a chance."

"I would rather abandon her," said the second mate, who was as timid as the first, apparently. "We are only five days from Christmas Island, where we——"

"Are you going to abandon a ship crammed to the hatches with sperm oil, an' worth thousands of dollars, to three savages, South Sea Island dogs?" in great surprise interrupted a veteran harpooner, a big sturdy Englishman named Broadrib, a general favorite with all hands, and who presumed on his station to express his views frankly.

"To say nothing of the boy up there," added Mr. Clough, sharing the old harpooner's disgust and amazement.

"He is safe enough, now," answered the mate. "Not one of those fellows could be driven above the sheer poles"—the first ratlines or crosspieces on the shrouds—"to save his life."

"Aye, he is safe enough now, but hunger, and thirst, and exposure will get him."

"Since you are in favor of taking the ship, Mr. Clough, I will give you one boat," answered the mate sharply. "My brother and I will take the other. We will take into our boat the three islanders, while you and Broadrib, and any of the remaining men can try your plan."

Mr. Clough shot a look of contempt at the cowardly mates.

"Very well," he said, "I will do it."

"I'm with you, Mr. Clough," said the harpooner.

"Well, you can't count on me," said one of the other sailors. "If the other mates are goin' to stay here, I am goin' to stay here, too."

The men were good men, but naturally they took their cue from their new commander and his first subordinate. The argument was fast and furious, but nothing could budge the mates.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mr. Clough at last, in deep disgust. "I'll board her single-handed." He turned to the mate. "I want to talk to the boy again. I will take all the risk. I will stand up for'ard here and if anybody gets hit, it will be I."

"I tell you I—" began the mate.

"We can't stay out here forever, and we can't abandon that ship," said Mr. Clough decisively. "I couldn't go back home and face our New Bedford people after that, and as for telling our people that we left a boy alone with those——"

"Give way, men, easy," said the mate reluctantly.

The boat approached the ship again.

"Rey, ahoy, Rey! Main topmast crosstrees, there!" shouted Mr. Clough, standing up.

Rey was pretty far gone by this time. He was clinging to his perch in grim determination. But the voice of the man he admired aroused him.

"Aye, aye, sir," shouted the lad.

"My boy, we are not going to leave you," returned the third mate. We are going to get the ship back somehow. You can help us. Climb over to the foremast and cut the fore royal stay. It will drop into the water and as soon as it is dark, I will try to board the ship by means of it and——"

"I can't do it, Mr. Clough," answered Rey despairingly.

"You must," insisted the mate, eagerly, "it's the only way, my lad."

Of course, the savages on deck heard the conversation, but they knew no English, and although the islander in the boat understood something of what was purposed, and opened his mouth to speak, the seaman who sat in front of him hit him a clip on the head with his clenched fist which silenced him.

The mutineers crowded the rail, but made no effort to throw anything. The mate had stopped the boat just as far away as it was possible for Mr. Clough to hear. It was growing dark, too, and their aim would not have been certain, and they needed the weapons. At any rate, whatever the reason, they did not offer to molest the mate who stood up in the bow of the whaleboat.

"Rey, you must try it," he repeated. "They won't go aloft. They won't hurt you."

"It isn't that," answered the boy. "I'm not afraid. But when I was on the gaff end to get the flag, one of them cut me with an axe. I have lost the use of my left arm. I can't hold on here very long. If you don't come soon, I am a goner."

"Now, you hold on for your life, lad," said Mr. Clough, disappointed and alarmed for the lad's safety, for he was very fond of Rey. "We will get aboard some way. Don't give up. Keep up your courage."

By this time the sun had set, and darkness was spreading over the sea. Mr. Clough's brilliant plan had been entirely practicable, but the utter inability of Rey McRae to carry out his part of it, rendered it necessary for him to think of something else.

The boats drew off. The forlorn and unfortunate Rey watched them until they were gray specks in the dark water. He felt dreadfully weak and sick. Finally, he decided he could not keep his position on the cross-trees any longer. He had unlimited confidence in the ability of Mr. Clough, but he would have to get some place where he could lie down if he was not to lose his hold and fall to the deck.

The broad main top lay below him invitingly. Of course, it was dangerous. There was a possibility that the savages in their desire to get him, might manage to climb to the top, although they could not get to the crosstrees; but the boy had no choice. He waited until it was completely dark. Then he slid quietly down from the crosstrees until he reached the top. Without mak-

ing a sound, he laid himself down, pillowed his head on a coil of rope with his face close to the lubber's hole so that he could look down without turning his head, and waited.

How long he waited, he could not tell. Perhaps, in spite of his anxiety, he fell asleep. At any rate, he was suddenly aroused by a tremendous racket aft in the cabin. He sat up, and although his shoulder was stiff and pained him frightfully, he got on his feet, clung to the rail of the top, and peered down to the deck, which he could dimly distinguish in the darkness. There was no moon, but the stars cast a faint light.

CHAPTER III

THE YOUNG MATE CHASES THE SHIP

THE argument in the boats had been fast and furious. Of course, there need have been no debate at all, if the mate on whom the command had devolved had been a man of resolution, and determination, and decision. He would have outlined a plan of action promptly, and the rest of his men would have fallen in with it at once. But he could not make up his mind as to the right course to be pursued. He was actually overcome with the sudden horror, and save for the futile suggestions he had made earlier in the evening, he could contribute little or nothing to the settlement of the question. Not to mince matters, he was in the grip of a panic. He could face the dangers of the sea, and the perils of his hazardous profession well enough, but this savage and brutal murder appalled and unnerved him. His brother, the second mate, was in little better case, and some of the crew naturally took their cue from these two officers, one of whom had now become the captain of the ship he was afraid to board. The Polynesians and the remaining Kingsmill Islander counted for nothing, or worse than nothing. Under the unusual and extraordinary conditions, some of the older seamen, especially the only harpooner left of the original crew, the veteran English sailor, Broadrib,

felt themselves entitled to join in the heated discussion. The chief advocate of prompt, bold, decisive action was the youngest of the officers, and the one of lowest rank.

In times of that sort of stress and strain, and under circumstances fraught with such danger, natural qualities of leadership usually determine who shall take charge. No braver man than Benjamin Clough, the third mate, ever walked a deck or set a course. Clough had been a passed midshipman on the *Essex* six years before, when she fought her famous battle in the harbor of Valparaiso against the *Phoebe* and the *Cherub*. He had been trained in the best school for seamen and fighting men afloat, the American Navy, in the last war with England. He had given up his naval connection after peace had been declared, had entered the merchant service, and had risen at the age of twenty to the position of third officer on the *Sharon*. He was now approaching his twenty-fourth year. And that he had been appointed to that important position on so fine a ship at so early an age was an evidence of his character and characteristics.

The mettle of the man was seen in his first proposition. If Rey McRae had been able to gain the fore top and thence had climbed up to the fore royal masthead, and had cut the fore royal stay, it would have fallen, in all probability, into the water from the end of the flying jib boom. Mr. Clough had intended to wait until dark, drift down across the bows of the ship in the whale-boat, drop overboard, catch the stay, climb up it, make his way on board by way of the head booms, and

then be governed by circumstances in his attack. But that plan, of course, had to be abandoned when the boy's wounds made it impossible for him to do his part. Some other way had to be devised. The young mate's thoughts naturally went toward the after part of the ship, since the possibility of boarding her forward was eliminated.

As is usual in such ships, a Jacob's ladder, which is a rope ladder with wooden rungs, hung from the stern. If he could get hold of that, he could climb into the ship through the after-cabin windows. He proposed that in the course of the discussion between the two boats which had drawn away out of sight and out of hearing from the ship in the growing darkness.

The savages aboard the *Sharon* had not sense enough to light any lamps or lanterns, but the men in the boats were near enough to see her dark outlines against the stars, as she backed and filled in the fitful breeze which, fortunately, still continued light, although there was a threatening cloud-bank on the horizon. The two Brace brothers were still determined upon abandoning the ship and making the best of their way to the nearest islands, about forty leagues to the eastward, and thence northeasterly to the Hawaiian Islands, which lay about two hundred leagues farther on.

"It's too dangerous, I tell you," urged the mate. "We're only nine white men and three natives; four of us have got to watch these savages in the boats; that leaves but five for boarding. It can't be done."

"We're practically unarmed save for our knives,"

eagerly chimed in the second mate, conveniently oblivious to the remaining harpoons and lances in the boats, "and what show would we have with those blood-thirsty madmen if we tried to board her?"

"They'd cut us down before ever one of us set foot on deck," continued the first officer, who had completely lost his head.

"It's a pity, of course, but the best thing for us to do is to give her up and make the best of our way to Christmas Island," urged the second officer.

But Clough swore by all that was holy that he would not give up the ship, and more than that, that he would not abandon the boy.

"Be reasonable, man. He is probably dead by this time," urged the cowardly mate.

"Well, if he is done for, it will be another score against those murderous savages," bitterly returned the other, who was not at all willing to be reasonable, according to the mate's ideas of reason. "Captain Norris placed that boy under my charge. He told me to teach him seamanship and navigation. I like the lad, and by God, I'll not desert him."

"But if he is dead?"

"If he is dead I will avenge him, and I want to tell you, Tom Brace," he continued abruptly, throwing discipline and sailorly subordination to the winds in his anger, "that if you sail away and leave that boy, you're a damned coward. They will think worse of you down East than they did of old Floyd Ireson. You remember how the women of Marblehead tarred and feathered him for much the same sort of conduct. And how you

will settle with your conscience for it, I can't see," he added, in a stubborn contempt, which he was at no pains to conceal.

"You are not the keeper of my conscience, Mr. Clough," returned Brace, with great asperity, yet rather weakly, for he could not escape the conviction that the rebuke was merited.

"No, I am not," was the scornful, insubordinate answer. "It seems to me that would be too small a job for any full-grown man."

"And I'll have you know that I am in command of the ship now that poor Captain Norris is gone," blustered the mate.

"Very well; if you won't exercise your command, I will. Here, lads." He stood up in the boat and faced the other boat, which was close by. "We aren't going to lose so fine a ship as that, are we?"

"No, sir," answered Broadrib promptly. "I'm with you for tryin' it."

Two other seamen made the same reply.

"And what kind of sailormen would we be if we left a boy, and as good and plucky a boy as young Rey McRae, to be butchered by those mutinous brutes?" continued Mr. Clough earnestly.

Again a little chorus of approval came from the three who had spoken before.

"I utterly refuse," said the mate angrily, "to sanction an attack upon the ship."

"I will hold you to your first proposition then," said Mr. Clough coolly. "Take everybody that doesn't want to join me into your boat, including the natives,

and let everybody that will volunteer go with me in the other."

The mate started to say something further, but Clough, at the end of his patience, turned on him, shaking his fist at him.

"Refuse at your peril," he roared. "If we ever get out of this, the whole of New Bedford is going to hear how you and your cowardly brother have behaved. Oh, yes, you can put me in irons if we ever get back aboard ship, but you can't do it here, and you can't silence me anywhere unless you kill me," continued the other vehemently. Then, not giving the mate time to reply, he turned to the men. "Who will go with me?"

"It is a foolhardy, dangerous experiment," shouted the younger Brace looking toward the men in the boats.

"That is the reason I am asking for volunteers," returned Clough.

"You are taking your lives in your hands," persisted the mate. "Those savages are crazy. They will——"

"Does anyone volunteer?"

"Count me with you, sir," said old Broadrib, lifting up his hand.

"And me!" "And me!" answered two younger sailors.

The rest, good enough men, but intimidated and unnerved by the mate's remarks, said nothing.

"Four of us will be enough, since nobody else offers," said Mr. Clough. "Here, we'll take the second mate's boat. That's the smaller of the two."

It so happened that the two seamen who had volunteered were already in the second mate's boat. The

two whale-boats were floating side by side and Clough promptly picked up the boat hook, fastened it on the bow of the other boat and drew them close together without troubling himself for the permission or sanction of anyone.

"Look out for your oars, men," he said to the men as the two boats swung together side by side. "Now the rest of you cowards tumble out of that boat and give her to the men who aren't afraid."

The second mate started to protest, but old Broadrib, who was the biggest man on the ship, rose from his seat, stepped over into the other boat, told the Polynesian to get out, which he did without any hesitation, and the majority of that boat's crew now being on the side of Mr. Clough, Nathan Brace concluded that the best thing for him to do would be to accept the situation. Accordingly he stepped over into his brother Tom's boat.

"Come on, Mr. Clough, git aboard," said the harpooner, and the next minute the two boats separated.

"We will show a light from the ship when we succeed," said Clough. "And when you see it, it will be safe for you cowards to come alongside."

"I can't stand this," suddenly burst out a young seaman left in the mate's boat. "Let me go with you, Mr. Clough."

"I'll go too," cried another, thoroughly ashamed of the craven part he had played.

"And I," said a third.

"It does you credit, lads, even though it comes late," said Clough. "But just stay in your boat and we'll do the work for you. I am glad you showed some spirit

even if late. Now get out the oars. You sit to starboard, Broadrib. You are big enough to pull against the other two. I'll steer. Give way gently."

In a short time under the lusty strokes of the men they had pulled some distance from the other boat and correspondingly nearer the ship.

"What's your plan, Mr. Clough, if I may make so bold as to ask?" said old Broadrib as the young mate gave orders to cease rowing.

"I think if we can get aboard by stratagem that will be the best way. If those savages are on the lookout, and we have no reason to suppose they are not, they would see the boat before we could reach the ship. We will go as near as we can without being observed, and then I will slip overboard, swim astern, catch hold of the Jacob's ladder, climb up, and get into the cabin. Once aboard I will be governed by circumstances. I have no doubt I can barricade the cabin and attract their attention to it, and while they are engaged with me, you can board by way of the main chains, or through the gangway, and take them in the rear. Understand?"

"Perfectly, sir," said old Broadrib.

"And you other lads?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Well, then, give way again, but slowly. Easy, lads, easy," continued the mate as they approached nearer the ship.

He did not draw very near, because if he were discovered it would be fatal. What he was about to do was an undertaking filled with great risks. For one thing,

there were apt to be sharks about. There was always a chance that one might seize him. If he were seen from the ship the three men would certainly strive to prevent him boarding her. They could easily kill him while he was in the water, or when he was scrambling up the ladder. Still, there was no other way. To have attempted to board her openly by the main chains would have been difficult unless both boats tried it, one on each side. It was possible to get aboard the ship that way, but it would mean a lot of noise and a fight either on the rail or the open deck. Through the cabin was the safest, most promising way.

The ship was only two degrees north of the line by the last observation. The water was warm and pleasant. Clough stripped himself to his white undershirt and drawers, slung his sheath knife around his neck and slipped into the water. He struck out boldly, although he swam noiselessly and with little splashing.

Just as he had congratulated himself that a few more strokes would bring him within reach of the Jacob's ladder, a sudden shift of the wind whirled the *Sharon* away from him. Of course, having no hand at the helm, she was under no control at all. As she swung about, her sails filled and she moved rapidly away. Mr. Clough was one of the best swimmers in New England, which was as fortunate as it was unusual for a sailor, some of whom never learn to swim, though their whole lives are passed at sea; for by a tantalizing series of shifts and changes of the variable breeze he was actually much over one hour in the water before he finally got his hand on the Jacob's ladder.

He had two motives for his persistency, either of them powerful enough to account for his dogged perseverance. The first was his professional pride; he would by no means give up the ship, allow himself to be beaten by those mutinous and murdering savages. The second was his great and to himself somewhat inexplicable liking for Rey McRae. He had never before realized how fond he had grown of the bright and handsome lad. He would save him from Captain Norris' dreadful fate at whatever cost. So he had continued the unequal battle—one single man in a mighty waste of sea, pursuing a great and masterless ship, one little bit of human flotsam kept afloat by courage begot of pride and affection!

Some of this time he was so near the erratic ship that anyone looking over the bulwarks or rail would infallibly have seen him. At such moments he did not dare even to take a stroke, but resorted to treading water. Sometimes he floated, but only when he was some distance away, for his white-clad body in the black waters would easily have been detected. Fortunately, he met with no shark while he fought indomitably.

He had given the men in the boat strict orders to keep the ship in sight, but to wait a signal or a call before trying to board. They did not know whether he had got aboard or not, but old Broadrib was a man used to obeying orders, so he possessed his soul in patience, although it was terribly hard. He surmised, in fact, that the constant shifting of the position of the ship had rendered it difficult for Mr. Clough to get aboard. He felt no apprehensions, however, for his fate, for he

knew he was one of the best swimmers of the crew and he believed that sooner or later he would make it. Of course, the officer might have been seized with a cramp, or caught by a shark, but in that case the men in the boat would certainly have heard a cry for help.

They sat quietly in the boat, waiting and listening with all their ears. They gave the boat just enough way to keep at a right distance from the erratic ship, whose bulk and top-hamper they could make out against the stars. Incidentally, they heard and saw nothing of the other boat. They wondered if she had not deserted them, deeming it useless to linger near the ship any longer. They judged it to be about an hour and a half after Mr. Clough's departure before they heard faintly some kind of a sound coming from the stern of the ship, which in its drifting course happened to be nearer them than at any time before. They decided it could only come from the mate, who must have got aboard and fallen foul of one of the savages. Glad of any excuse for action, they bent eagerly to their oars, therefore, and the light whale-boat was soon leaping over the black water toward the big ship.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT IN THE DARK

THE hour and a half that the mate had spent in the water was the longest he ever passed in his life. He was consumed with maddening anxiety. Several times he had almost made the capricious ship, only to see her fall off and fade away from him. He wondered if he would ever succeed in reaching her. Sometimes he thought that he would better abandon the attempt in that way, swim back to the boat and boldly row alongside the ship and board her openly at whatever risk of detection and possible, nay, certain, opposition. He had to dismiss those fleeting thoughts, however, when he discovered that he had completely lost the bearings of his boat. He could not see her from the surface of the water. He had no idea where she was. It was the ship or nothing. Well, he was rather glad on the whole that no alternative presented itself. Desperately he renewed his pursuit of the *Sharon*. As he struck out bravely again and again he resolved that he would not be beaten by all the winds that blew upon the broad Pacific Ocean! He swore he'd rather die himself than give up.

A mist was stealing over the heavens again, blotting out the stars so that amid all the shifts and changes he had made in pursuing the ship, he lost all sense of direction. Sometimes as she glided, ghostlike, silently away

from him, he had difficulty in keeping her in view in the growing obscurity and thickening haze. Two or three times he was tempted to hail the ship in the hope of getting an answer from the boy. But of course that would have been fatal to his purpose of concealment and his design of surprise, so he kept grimly silent, although consumed with apprehension, while he pursued the fleeting, wayward vessel.

If there had been an observer, it would have been a curious spectacle, a half naked man swimming in the center of the Pacific Ocean after a huge uncontrolled ship. Never had the *Sharon* behaved so erratically. It was maddening. Just when he thought he had her, she would be whisked out of his reach as if some gigantic hand were moving her away on purpose to tantalize him.

His inability only made him the more determined. He set his teeth and swore that he would get to that ship if he had to swim after her to the South American coast, toward which she was, generally speaking, heading and drifting.

After a while he disregarded his former precautions and seeing a chance, struck out boldly. He half expected that he would have no better fortune than before, but for a wonder the wind held steady and the ship did also. He got alongside just abaft the main chains. Throwing prudence to the wind in his desperation, he swam aft toward the Jacob's ladder hanging astern and in a few moments he reached up and clutched the lowest rung.

Victory so far! He had no idea how tired and

exhausted he had become, for his anxiety had added to the weariness induced by his great and long-continued physical exertions, until he tried to draw himself up out of the water. It was almost an impossible task. Nevertheless, he had not gone that far and he had not battled that long to give up then.

He hung on like grim death, perseveringly struggling until finally by a last superhuman effort he managed to drag himself up on the ladder. He swung there, panting and exhausted, for a little space to rest and to summon his strength for what might be before him.

As he swung gently to and fro he peered up past the open stern cabin window expecting any moment to see a black face out-thrust from it against the faint stars overhead, to hear a yell, to feel the descending lance or spade or axe or whatever it might be. But the black opening of the window remained as it was. Glancing up farther along the stern of the ship, he saw that the rail above was untenanted.

With a prayer that he might be given strength to go through with his task, at last he began slowly to climb the ladder. Presently he got his hand on the port sill. The next moment he crawled through the opening, stepped cautiously over the transom and stood on the deck at last. He had moved with catlike softness and had made no sound. It was as black as midnight inside the cabin, but he knew perfectly well where he was and in what direction to go. He was in the captain's cabin, and although it was a place to which the third mate infrequently resorted, still he had been in it before and he realized his whereabouts. He hesitated for a

moment, uncertain as to whether to try to light a lantern or not. He knew there were weapons somewhere in the captain's cabin, but to strike a light with flint and steel would inevitably betray him if anyone were in the main cabin forward of this. Besides he did not know where these things were. The pistols would probably be locked up, it would take some time to find them, he might have to break a number of locks to get at them. The better plan would be to seek to surprise the savages and make shift with what weapons he had.

Detaching his sheath knife from its laniard and baring the blade he stepped across the stateroom and softly opened the door into the main cabin. He stopped a moment to listen, knife uplifted. There was not a sound on the ship save the creaking of the timbers, the flapping of the sails, and the wash of the water as she lifted to the seas and swung to and fro as the canvas filled and emptied. He could see through the open door in the break of the poop deck a faint grayness, but nothing else.

As he stepped cautiously toward the entrance, his outstretched foot came in sudden contact with something soft and warm—a human body! Whose? He was enlightened on the instant for what he had stepped on was very much alive. It appeared that one of the islanders had come aft into the cabin, had lain down on the floor, and had gone to sleep after gorging himself from cabin stores.

The touch of the third mate's bare foot instantly aroused the South Sea Islander, who slept lightly like all savages. He scrambled to his feet with amazing swift-

ness, and as he did so, threw Mr. Clough off his balance. The latter did not fall, but he came near it, and before he recovered himself and could strike with his knife, the savage with a yell like a bull of Bashan closed with him.

Now Clough was a strong young man, but he had been over an hour and a half in the water, swimming hard; he was greatly exhausted, and had enjoyed no time to recover his strength; furthermore, he was taken at a disadvantage, and he was engaged with a man who weighed at least fifty pounds more than he, in the prime of life and who had been passing the day in idleness. It was a most unequal combat, but the mate fully realized that the fate of the men in the boats, the fate of the boy on the crosstrees, and the fate of the ship, to say nothing of his own life, depended upon him. Those thoughts nerved his arm and quickened his heart.

With a sudden and fleeting recognition of the fact that there was something to be said for the contention of the Brace brothers as to the dangers of the attempt, Mr. Clough struggled with the islander with all his might and in silence. He had no breath to waste in useless yelling. Of course, the brown man had no skill in wrestling, but he had succeeded in getting a terrible grip on the staggering white man and he hung on to him like a boa constrictor. Would brute force and rage and that awful grip overcome skill and determination?

The two reeled about the cabin in the darkness, crashing against transoms, doors, tables. Neither was at first able to get the mastery of the other. Of course, the savage did not know with whom he was fighting and

could not realize, if he had known, how his antagonist happened to be there. He was fighting, however, instinctively like an animal and roaring like one.

Mr. Clough, caught in that strangle hold though he was, strove desperately to free his arm so as to be able to make use of his knife. Unfortunately, the hand which held the knife had been pinned against his side by the clasp of the black man's arms. The mate had fought silently and with a complete realization of the situation. But as the struggle proceeded and as he realized that they were making a great noise anyway, he raised his voice and shouted mightily hoping that Broadrib might be near enough to the ship to hear and come to his rescue, else it would finally go hard with him.

Meanwhile, Clough continually strove to get his arm free so he could strike with his knife. The islander was fighting like a beast, trying to bite him like an animal. Indeed, once he did get his teeth into the mate's shoulder, but the American writhed himself free and fought on with desperation.

It was that cry and the noise they made fighting around the cabin which awoke Rey McRae in the top. He, too, had acquired the sailor's faculty of awakening with all his senses on the alert. As he got to his feet, forgetting in his excitement the stiffness and soreness of his shoulder and arm, he naturally peered down toward the after part of the ship whence the sounds came, wondering for the moment what was happening. He was not the only person on the ship who heard the shouts of the mate. The other two islanders, also filled to repletion with food, had gone heavily to sleep in such

different parts of the *Sharon* as they fancied. The noise awakened first one and then the other. The first one awake stood bewildered for a few moments until he found that the sound came from the after cabin. Then he started slowly and presently came stumbling aft toward the cabin door. The mate's cry gave him panic for a moment. His body made a dark blur against the lighter deck planking. The boy could easily make out his figure.

Rey thought quickly. He realized of course, that somebody, and he was sure he recognized the tones of the voice shouting for help, had boarded the *Sharon* by the stern. He could see that there were but two men on deck and he knew that whoever had boarded her must be fighting the third savage in the cabin. If the other two joined forces with that man, that would be the end of the man in the cabin.

What could he do? A huge treble-sheaved spare topblock lay in the top. He had noticed it when he came down and had thought then that it might prove handy as a weapon if the savages attempted to rush the top. He had cast it loose for that purpose. It lay ready to his hand. The boy had been trained in a good school; to think was to act. He seized the topblock and lifted it above his head in spite of the pain that the movement gave him. He had to use two hands to do it, it was so big and heavy. Just as the first savage stooped toward the door at the break of the poop Rey threw the block mightily. He used such force that the strain tore open the wound in his shoulder. But his aim was perfect. The block struck the islander on the side of

the head and knocked him down. He fell across the doorway and lay motionless.

Meanwhile the tumult in the cabin had continued, the shouts of the white man being half drowned by the yells of the islander; but now one voice suddenly stopped. Clough had wrenched his right hand free at last; he had struck desperately with his knife, and the islander had gone to his account. The next moment Rey McRae, still clinging to the rail of the top, glimpsed a white, ghostly looking figure coming out through the cabin door.

"Look out!" he shouted at the top of his voice. "There is another one! Look out!"

But the third islander who had stopped at the body of the second had no stomach for a further fight. He stood in uncertain terror for a moment, and then as Clough leaped at him he turned and ran forward, disappearing in the darkness. The next moment the whale-boat came grinding alongside to starboard and a few seconds thereafter Broadrib sprang over the rail by way of the main chains.

"Mr. Clough!" he shouted.

"All right," answered the mate cheerily.

"It was a long wait, sir."

"Yes, I just got aboard."

"An' the Injuns?" asked the harpooner, giving the men the common name by which they were described.

"One of them is dead in the cabin, one is here and the third has gone forward."

"An' the lad, sir."

"He hailed me from the top a moment ago; warn-

ing me, and I think that he probably saved my life by it. Wait," said the mate, breaking off. "Ahoy the top," he shouted. "Rey, where are you?"

But no answer came to the hail.

"I guess we better make a light, sir," said old Broadrib, "then we can see where we stand."

"Good," said Clough.

"There ought to be some fire for'ard still, an' I'll have a lantern aglow in a jiffy," answered the harpooner, turning forward.

"Take care of yourself. There is a third savage loose on the ship."

"Is he in the galley?" asked the harpooner, referring to the kitchen, which was a built-up house on the deck forward of the main mast near the try-pots.

"No, he went clear for'ard."

"I'll watch out for him, sir," answered Broadrib, moving away.

Mr. Clough, still in a fever of anxiety as he sought to recover breath and strength again, for the battle in the dark had taxed him to the uttermost, heard him moving about among the pots and pans. Presently he came aft carrying a ship's lantern lighted. Meanwhile the mate had called to the two remaining men in the boat to come aboard, which they hastened to do.

By the time the old seaman got back to the quarter deck, there were four men on the deck of the *Sharon*, with a lantern.

"Shall we show the light to the other boat, sir?" asked the harpooner.

"Yes, presently, of course," answered Clough.

"Two of you bring up the dead body of the man from the cabin and lay him on the deck. Meanwhile let us see what is the matter with this one." He bent over him and turned him over. "Stone dead!" he said. "I wonder——"

"This is what done it, sir," answered one of the sailors named Rice, who had taken the lantern.

He picked up a huge topblock which had rolled to leeward.

"The boy must have throwed it from the top," said Storey, the other one.

"Aye," said the mate. "Main top there," he yelled again, and as no answer came, he added with growing alarm: "Rice, jump up there and see what has become of the boy. He may need help. You go with him, Storey," he said to the other man. "Bear a hand, lads. Now show the lantern over the side as a signal to the other boat, Broadrib."

While the harpooner who had just dragged the other dead islander from the cabin swung his lantern vigorously at either gangway, Rice and Storey clambered up the main top.

"Boy's here, sir, but he has fainted or is dead," hailed one of the men.

"There's a tackle up there, isn't there, or a top-burton?" answered Clough promptly, but with a sudden sinking of the heart.

"Yes, sir."

"Bend him on to it and send him down, gently," ordered the mate. "I hope to heaven he isn't dead," he said, as the men having speedily and skilfully obeyed

his orders, he caught the lad, and eased him to the deck. A brief inspection indicated that the boy had only fainted. "You keep watch here a moment or two, Broadrib," said the mate, picking up the boy. "I'll take him to my cabin. I will get some dry clothes on myself and see what's the matter with Rey. Remember, there is one islander loose on the ship. The other boat will probably be alongside in a few minutes and then we will make a search for him."

But Mr. Clough was gone much longer than he anticipated. Some ten or fifteen minutes had elapsed before he again came out on deck, now completely clothed in a dry uniform. He had brought a sou'wester and a heavy oilskin coat with him, sensing as a true seaman some sort of a change in the weather.

The men had now lighted the lanterns that were fastened to the break of the poop, as well as the binnacle lamp, and these with that held by Broadrib plainly revealed the mate's face to the three waiting seamen. They could not fail to note its look of amazement, not to say complete bewilderment mingled with a certain dismay or alarm; the frank and open young man not being skilled in concealing his feelings. Broadrib, the senior of the three and a privileged character, presumed to question his superior.

"Good God, Mr. Clough, sir, what's the matter?"

"Why, nothing — er — I've had a shock, I'll admit."

"Is it young Rey, sir?" broke in Rice.

"I hope there ain't nothin' serious the matter with him, sir," chimed in Storey.

"No, he's right enough," answered the mate

promptly, "save for a rather deep cut in his shoulder and some loss of blood—you see, it's—er—the ship—and——"

Every man there was weatherwise enough to recognize the situation and in their sensing of danger, instinctive with a seaman, Clough's lame explanation passed without further comment or notice. Old Broadrib, indeed, realized that the mate had not committed himself at all, but he said nothing. There were other things of more pressing importance for their consideration anyway. The explanation of the mate's dismay could, nay must, wait.

CHAPTER V

THE MATE'S DISCOVERY

WHEN Mr. Clough had carried the unconscious Rey into the main cabin he had laid him gently down on one of the transoms and finding flint, steel, and tinder box at hand, seen easily by the light thrown within the door from the lantern at the break of the poop which one of the men had just lighted, he lighted the swinging oil lamp and turned to examine the lad more carefully than he had been able to do heretofore.

Rey had not yet recovered consciousness. He lay just as the mate had placed him, apparently utterly collapsed, his head thrown back, his eyes closed, his face under his bright hair deathly white, every muscle relaxed. Mr. Clough bent over him in great anxiety. The boy was breathing faintly, that was plain enough to the mate's searching glance. There was a dark red stain on his shirt at his shoulder, his left shoulder fortunately, the mate noticed. His shirt was open at the throat. He was lightly clad for the tropic weather, and had gone aloft without his jacket. The light fell fairly upon him from the hanging lamp and the mate noticed that the blood-stain at the shoulder was growing larger. The blood was flowing from an open wound. It must be stanchied and the wound dressed at once.

Without ceremony the mate lifted the boy up, his

fingers sought the opening in the shirt. He tore it down the front and then ripped it sideways to expose the shoulder. He had worked rapidly if somewhat mechanically, trusting to his sense of touch—it was no great matter to tear open a boy's shirt—his eyes meanwhile roving the cabin for the pitcher of water that usually sat upon the table in its cradle in fair weather, but which he and the struggling Papuan had tumbled to the deck during their battle in the cabin.

Suddenly he stopped and remained motionless in bewildered surprise. Then he withdrew his hand with a quick movement, lowered his still unconscious burden to the transom and bent over him in an amazement that was almost a panic. The young mate's weather-beaten countenance had been a little pale from his previous exertions. It suddenly crimsoned through its tan. He stared down at the other occupant of the cabin. He caught a glimpse of a slender neck, the whiter by contrast with the brown of wind and sun of the youthful face above it. The open shirt disclosed more than a skin of dazzling whiteness. He sensed a growing curve, a little trim up-springing of the breast, a maiden shrine, so unwittingly profaned. In a word the person before him was a girl—a woman!

Clough's first motion did credit to his manhood. He carefully drew the torn edges of the shirt together over the breast of his companion. Then he turned quickly to the cabin door and closed it, thrusting home the bolt lest someone should blunder in and surprise the secret which he felt no liberty as yet to reveal. Then he lifted the slight form of the girl up and carried her

into her own cabin. Next he fetched water and, after carefully turning down the torn shirt at the transverse rip, washed the poor little hurt shoulder—for so he now phrased it to himself, sex making all the difference.

With a gentle tenderness scarcely to be expected from one who had just fought the ocean with mighty arm and brought the savage islander to death, he anointed and bandaged the wound, then he forced a drop or two of spirits and water between the girl's lips, at the same time laving her temples. He was rewarded by seeing her eyes open presently.

She stared up at him bending over her at first uncomprehendingly. Then her hand went to her shoulder. Next she sat up in her berth, and as the torn shirt started to fall away she caught it together with her hand in frantic instinctive gesture.

Her face flamed with sudden red. Her eyes filled. She forgot the horrors of the last few hours to which she had been a witness. She did not give a thought to the peril she had just gone through, the dangers that had menaced her faded out of her recollection, even the anxiety she had felt for the mate was unheeded. The consciousness of the wound in her shoulder left her in the face of the demand of a greater crisis. The boy that had been a girl, suddenly became a woman. Her modesty was to the fore. Nothing else mattered for the moment. There, in that small cabin, in that small ship, blood-stained, tragedy-burdened, and even yet facing one of the greatest perils of the deep, in the lonely waste of the great Pacific—the girl that had been a boy became a woman.

And womanlike, with beating heart and flaming cheek she looked at the man and wondered.

For his part he, too, wondered and he, too, forgot. He could for the moment recall nothing but that she was a woman. All his thoughts were of the great discovery he had just made. In that same cabin, ship, and sea, with the same peril threatening, he was conscious of her sex first of all.

She broke the silence first.

"You know?" she whispered.

"Yes."

Her hand went to her face at that. Unthinkingly she forgot what chanced when she no longer held the remains of her torn garment. Ben Clough was only a young merchant sailor, a junior officer in a hard rough service. But he had good blood in him. He looked quickly away. The sound of her low sob moved him to the depths.

"Forgive me," he said with averted glance. "I had no idea. I wanted to stanch the flow of blood from your shoulder."

"I understand," answered the girl in low tones to match his own.

"How do you feel now, Rey? Is that your name?"

"My name is Audrey, and I feel well enough. Did that savage hurt you, Mr. Clough?"

"No. But I'd have been killed if you had not heaved that topblock on the other. I owe my life to you."

"It's nothing. We'll all owe our lives to you."

Mr. Clough nodded. The fact was obvious, why make any bones about acknowledging it.

"I must go to my cabin now for a change of clothes" — for the first time he was aware that his present attire was hardly suited to an interview with a woman — "the ship and the other boat need looking after."

He turned away in awkward embarrassment.

"Wait," cried the girl. "Please. You won't tell the others — yet?"

"No."

"How many men are aboard now?"

"Four all told."

"I'll dress and come out to give you what help I can," she said as he turned away.

He nodded again. He knew she could not be of much service, but she could do something, hold the wheel steady perhaps even if she were wounded. And she thrilled to the thought that he accepted her offer of service just as he would if she had been the boy he and all the others had fancied her.

The mate's bandaging had been skilful indeed. It could not be improved upon. He had put something healing in the open wound besides water evidently. It felt much better. She found she could even use that left arm a little, awkward and painful as the effort was. She got up, put on another shirt, and even managed to get into her pea-jacket.

A knock on the door interrupted her. She opened it. There stood Mr. Clough now fully dressed. He had some ship's bread and a slice of cold ham in his hands.

"Eat," said he. "You'll need your strength. Please don't come out on deck until I call you. One of the

savages is still aboard and I'd rather you'd stay snug in here until——”

She nodded. The whole situation indicated the changed relationship. Before she would have waited upon him. Before he would have ordered instead of requested her. Yes, she was a woman! He knew it, realized it. That made all the difference in the world. She smiled. And then she set to work on the provisions with a zest, waiting the summons she knew would come, with an eagerness she was at no pains to disguise.

No wonder Mr. Clough looked thoughtful and a little appalled when he confronted the men.

There was a woman aboard the ship—where no woman had a right to be!

And yet the young mate was glad she was there, for he knew instantly that she meant a great deal to him now. Even when he thought her a boy he had liked her extremely, better than anyone he knew, and now ——

CHAPTER VI

IN THE GRIP OF THE STORM

IT WAS well that Clough had not lingered in the cabin any longer, for old Broadrib, dismissing the previous affair from his mind, began again, with even greater anxiety in his voice after that first exclamation of surprise at the mate's appearance.

"I was just comin' aft to call you, sir."

Clough realized instantly why Broadrib had been so desirous of summoning him and what he feared. Like every other sailor, so soon as he came out on deck he had cast a glance to windward and then he had rapidly swept the whole sky with his vision. What he saw was not reassuring. There was not a single star visible. It was as black as Egypt. What little wind there had been before had almost died away. Blaming himself for not having looked at the barometer before, although it could reveal little more than his weather sense told him, he seized Broadrib's lantern and inspected the glass. It had fallen low indeed. Mr. Clough knew at once what was toward.

That haze had grown thicker. One of those sudden and it might be tremendous storms of the tropics was at hand. Like all good sailors, Clough acted with dazzling promptness.

"The other boat?" he cried.

"Haven't seen it, sir."

"Have you shown a light?"

"Half a dozen times."

"Both sides?"

"Yes, sir."

"There is wind in that sky, Broadrib," said the mate.

"I'm much mistook if there ain't a lot of it, too," answered the harpooner.

"We'll have to get the canvas off the ship."

"With but four hands, sir?" exclaimed old Broadrib.

"Exactly. Rice, jump aloft and furl the mizzen to'gall'nt s'l. Broadrib, you are the biggest and strongest of us all, you try the main to'gall'nt. Storey, you'll take the fore to'gall'nt——"

"And how about that Injun for'ard, sir?"

"Jump aloft, you two men," answered Clough after a second's pause. "I'll go for'ard with Storey and get him. Once you two get in the shrouds you are safe."

"Aye, aye, sir," cried the two men, springing into the rigging and racing up it to perform their appointed tasks.

"Bear a hand," shouted Clough as he and Storey ran forward after casting off the halliards and sheets of the sails mentioned and easing down the yards. "We aren't going to have much leeway."

As he spoke a blinding flash of lightning shot down from the zenith and was followed a few seconds later by a terrific clap of thunder. The lightning did one thing. It discovered to the mate the third islander crouching between the knightheds forward. He had a

whaling lance in his hand and with a yell he hurled it at the two seamen. Clough, who was in advance, dropped to the deck and Storey sprang aside. The lance buried itself in the planks of the waist abaft them. The next moment the mate was on him. The now badly frightened savage was taken at a disadvantage. Before he could make a move Clough struck him, and Storey grabbed at him. The islander, instead of closing, wrenched himself away from Storey and in panic terror sprang up on the rail, and as the two men leaped at him he jumped or fell overboard.

"That's the end of him," said Clough grimly. "Up aloft with you, Storey, and take in the fore to'gall'nt s'l. I'll tend the sheets and halliards. Quick, for God's sake, man. Look at that."

That was another flash of lightning and another peal of thunder. It was followed presently by a hail from Broadrib.

"On deck there!"

"What is it, Broadrib?" answered the mate, running aft toward the wheel.

"I seed the boat in that flash."

"Where away?"

"She looks to be about a mile broad off the starboard bow, sir."

"What were they doing?"

"Rowin' like mad toward us. The first flash must have showed us to 'em."

"The Braces are a pair of cowards," muttered Clough to himself as he seized the wheel. "But there are good men in that boat. I wish we had them here."

Bear a hand, lads," he shouted. "If we can get fore and mizzen tops'ls off her we'll have a bit better chance."

He could tell from the feel of the wheel that the ship was lying motionless or slowly drifting through the water. She had no steerage way.

"All ready with the mizzen to'gall'nt s'l," cried Rice suddenly.

He had the smallest sail and the shortest distance to go. Broadrib had the heaviest task, but the sail had already been spilled by the boy hours before and he presently signified that he, too, had finished. Storey, beginning later and with a heavier sail than Rice, had not yet completed his arduous task.

"Lay down from aloft, Broadrib," shouted the mate. "We'll all tackle the mizzen tops'l. The boy—er—is hurt, but I'll call him and——"

"I am still good for something, Mr. Clough," said Rey at that moment. She had been waiting at the cabin door for her summons.

The thunder and the lightning and that sense of peril which, even though so young and a woman, she was yet sailor enough to feel, had brought her out on deck.

"I am not good for much, but anyway I can steer in this light wind with one hand."

Really Rey felt very much refreshed. The food she had eaten, the dressing of her wound, and, above all, the relief in her mind from the anxieties which had nearly wrecked her, made her another woman. And even the fact that the mate had discovered her sex, with

all the possibilities of the situation, had contributed to her new peace of mind. Rey was very fond of the mate, with a liking which the other had fancied was only boyish, but which was really of quite another sort indeed. Under other circumstances Clough would have sent her below again at once, but now her help would be invaluable, not so much for what she could do herself, but because she could stand by the wheel, especially since the ship was nearly motionless, and thus enable Clough to go aloft and add his strength to that of the other three men.

"Good lad!" he began using the old address from force of habit. "Take the wheel," he continued, without further parley. "Stand by for orders from me. She's barely got steerage way now. For'ard there!"

"Aye, Aye, sir."

"Got that to'gall'nt s'l stowed, Storey?"

"Yes, sir."

"Come along, Broadrib," said Clough, springing into the mizzen top, where Rice already awaited them.

Meanwhile, Storey, having laid down from aloft, in obedience to orders, settled away the mizzen topsail halliards, cast off the sheets and then, by Mr. Clough's direction, went forward again and did the same thing for the fore topsail halliards and sheets. He did more, he put forth valiant efforts on the mizzen topsail clew lines and so assisted to haul the sail up to the yards.

Meanwhile the three men, Broadrib taking the bunt, and Rice and the mate each one of the yard arms, made shift to furl the mizzen topsail. The thunder and the lightning, now continuous, stimulated them to quick,

desperate work, if they had needed any urging other than the sense of their terrible peril. There was no wind as yet. Casting anxious glances up to starboard from time to time, they could see the other boat revealed by the lightning. She was nearer now. The men were bending to the oars and pulling like mad men. They realized that if they did not get aboard the ship before the storm broke, they would be doomed. The men on the ship realized it, too. But there was nothing they could do to help, because the *Sharon* had as yet no steerage way. Rey's job was an easy one so far.

Presently, having made all snug in the mizzen topsail, the three men dropped down to the deck again.

"Rice," said Clough, "brail in the spanker and settle away the halliards and then clap tackles on the fore and main clew garnets all ready for us. Storey, you and Broadrib and I will tackle the fore tops'l."

"The yard's down on the cap, sir, and I've got the clew lines hauled out," said Storey.

"Well done," said the mate, starting forward.

"Mr. Clough," interrupted Audrey, shuddering a little at the sight as revealed by the lighting, now more frequent, "these dead bodies here?"

"Heave them overboard, Broadrib," said the mate, and, without ceremony, the big harpooner picked them up one at a time, and dropped them over the rail.

"How do you feel, youngster," asked Clough, who could not for the life of him, use any other address.

"All right so far," answered the girl cheerfully enough.

Then the mate ran forward and soon joined his comrades on the fore topsail yard. This was a sail almost twice as big as the mizzen topsail. It was a terrific job for three men, even three of the best, as those were, but they finally got it furled after a fashion, the gaskets were well knotted, and a furling line was passed about it to make it secure. Then the three tired men lay down on deck. There was yet no rest for them.

Sail on the ship had now been reduced to the main topsail, the head sails and the courses, which were hanging in the brails. Rice, by means of a block and tackle and with some assistance from Rey, had effected the task of brailing them up. They next lowered the head sails, except the staysail, but they had not time to stow them.

"Men," said Mr. Clough, stopping and wiping the sweat from his face, his breath coming short, his chest heaving from the tremendous exertions they had gone through with, "we'd be safer if we could get a reef in that main tops'l."

"Anything you says, we'll try, sir," said old Broadrib, who seemed made of iron.

Rice and Storey, younger men and slighter build, were almost exhausted, but they straightened up and declared they also were ready.

"That boat will be alongside in five minutes, sir," said Broadrib, "an' if we can wait until then——"

But as he spoke, every man on the ship realized that all the grace they were to be allowed had been granted them, and there was to be no five minutes, no one minute even. With a sound like a gigantic sigh, a

sudden puff of wind filled the sails. It died away in a second, it came stronger the next moment, and then, with a scream like that of all the lost spirits of creation since the world began, the tempest broke upon them.

"Hard down with the helm, Rey," yelled Mr. Clough. "Down with it! Down with it," he shouted, as the *Sharon* began to pay off. "Jump over to the lee braces, you men. Brace up, brace sharp up," he shouted, and then, seeing Rey struggling desperately with one arm to put the helm down and force the ship up into the wind, so that she would not fall into the trough of the sea, while Broadrib and the other two men sprang to their places, the mate himself leaped to the wheel.

He had to use all his strength, and force, and skill, and determination, to hold her up. For with a second onslaught, to which the terrific outburst of a moment since seemed mere child's play, the full fury of the sudden tempest was hurled upon them. The thunder and lightning were continuous.

The other whale-boat was now close aboard. Five more minutes — four — three — two — one even, and they might have gained the ship. Now it had become as impossible for them to board the *Sharon* as it would have been to row up Niagara Falls. Indeed, they had lost control of the boat, and the girl who had run up to windward at Clough's orders, saw it overturned in the gigantic seas. The lightning revealed to her a mass of tossing heads and arms and oars, and then — nothing!

"She's gone," she turned, and shouted down the wind between her hands.

Mr. Clough nodded. He knew, of course, that no boat could survive. He had other things to think of then. The ship was heeling over on her beam ends, until the water was being forced in through the lee scuppers. The yards were now braced sharp up, the lee braces hauled flat aft, they had done all that man could do. Stop. There was one thing.

"That whale alongside," said Broadrib, climbing aft and shouting into Mr. Clough's ear.

"Cut it adrift," said the mate. "It is an awful drag on us and she steers badly enough as it is."

Broadrib needed no further order. With a whaling spade, which he found in the lee scuppers, where it had been left by the islanders, he cut the lashings, and the whale drifted away. The ship, considerably eased thereby, righted, came to the wind and made a little better weather of it on a more even keel. Still, the relief was not great. At a sign from the mate, Storey and Rice came aft and one relieved him at the wheel. Beckoning Broadrib, he climbed up to windward, where the girl clung to the rail by the weather mizzen shrouds.

"She'll never stand the canvas that is on her long," roared the mate.

"No," said the harpooneer.

The next instant, with a report like a cannon, the main sail, which had been flapping furiously, tore away, and after threshing about wildly, with the block swinging, so that no man could go near it, it finally was ripped from the yard and whirled away by the wind,

showing for a moment like a great cloud against the blackness. The fore sail followed suit a short time after. This perceptibly eased the ship.

"If we had had a chance to reef that main tops'l," said Clough, "we would have been all right."

"We're all right yet, sir," answered the harpooner, "if it doesn't blow harder."

The mate tried to glance to windward, but the force of the tempest was so great, that he could scarcely hold his head up to it, and in the black darkness there was little to see except the white wave-tops whipped into fine wind-driven spray, that cut like needles when it slashed across the face.

The big main topmast was bending and buckling like a coach whip. It seemed to the two men that the wind was coming stronger. It was a stout, honest, New England spar and the sail was made of the best canvas that could be woven. The owners had spared nothing in fitting out the *Sharon* with everything necessary, but it was not in wood and canvas and hemp and rope and iron, to stand against such a storm as that. Mast and sail did nobly. They resisted pressure greater than their fashioners would have deemed possible, but the end finally came.

With a mighty crash the main topmast went by the board and thundered alongside. The great spar and sail threshed to and fro and presently the mizzen topmast and the fore topmast went down in the wreck. The fore staysail forward being now the only sail set, the ship's head payed off and she went drifting before the wind. The sail held nobly.

"We've got to clear away that wreck," shouted Mr. Clough in Broadrib's ear. "Those spars battering alongside will spring a butt and we'll founder."

Broadrib nodded. He got three axes. At a sign from the mate, Rice went back to the wheel and relieved Storey. The three other men went aloft. The mate to the fore top, Broadrib to the main, Rice to the mizzen. Working desperately, they managed at last to cut away the rigging and the spars fell, drifted and dragged or were swept clear by the seas. The loss of all the top-hamper relieved the ship immensely. The spanker had blown out of the brails and there was nothing they could do but drift before the wind under the storm staysail.

No one left the deck during the night. But by afternoon of the next day the sudden tropic storm had nearly blown itself out. The sun broke through the clouds to lighten a bright and sparkling, if wildly heaving sea. The wind had died to a fresh breeze, but the waves would run high for a long time. The ship itself was sound so far as the hull was concerned, later on the well and the pumps told them that, but aloft and along the crushed and battered rails she looked a helpless ruin as she rose and fell in the tremendous waves which had been raised by the terrific tempest and which continued their mad tumbling long after the force of the wind had spent itself. She seemed a wreck; masts, yards, sails, head booms, boats, lee rails—everything above the tops, gone!

It was with white, haggard, drawn faces that the men confronted each other. Poor Rey was more weary

than any of them. She had pluckily stuck to her post and done what she could. Now she was in a state of utter collapse. Clough had nothing but praise for her.

"We're better than a thousand dead men yet," he said cheerily, as Broadrib, having carefully sounded the well, reported the ship fairly dry. "The storm has blown itself out. The worst has happened to us. We'll get something to eat. The lad, here, to whom under God the salvation of the ship is due, I take it, for if he hadn't knocked that Indian down with that topblock, he would have got me, and the rest of you would have been out there with the other whale-boat, must have something hot. Then he must go below and take a long sleep. After we get some food, we'll consult together what's to be done and make a beginning when we've had some rest and got freshened up a bit. Can any of you cook?"

"I can make shift at it, I guess, sir," said Rice.

"Go ahead, then. Go down into the cabin. You will find our stores in the lazaret. We'll eat the best we've got on the ship," said Mr. Clough, carefully assisting Audrey below as he spoke.

Poor Rey was all in. The bandages that the mate had put on her shoulder had held, however, even in the involuntary uses to which she had put her arm. In spite of her overwhelming exhaustion, Clough was confident, that after a good rest and something to eat, the girl would be all right. After she had enjoyed her share of the meal Rice soon had ready, she tumbled into her berth and knew no more for the next twelve hours. She had always been a good sleeper,

but she had never slept so hard and so restfully in all her life as during that day. The mate had been kind to her. He had praised her. He was a good man, and true. She had indeed done her part. She was glad now, that he knew.

And after doing what was immediately necessary to the ship the others turned in also, relieving one another at the wheel until all were rested and refreshed.

CHAPTER VII

THE MAKING OF A BOY

THERE was, of course, much still to be done to get the ship in workable trim the next morning, despite what they had accomplished, but before he devoted himself to the completion of that formidable task, Clough interviewed the young woman whom fate had thrown upon his hands. He was not repining against his fortunes—on the contrary! The more he thought of the situation, the better he liked it, and the greater his prospective enjoyment and satisfaction became.

Reflecting that the girl had enjoyed a good, long sleep and that the open cut in her shoulder would need looking after and redressing, however delicate the task, and realizing that she could by no means compass it herself, he made up his mind as to what was required of him, and sometime after daybreak, he knocked upon the door of her cabin.

When she answered his call, he suggested that she get up at once, as he had much to do and he wished to redress her wound and make her comfortable for the day, before he essayed the harder tasks.

She assented instantly, promising to be ready for him in a few moments. Then he went out on deck again for a moment and was pleased to find every promise of fine, fair days in the look of sky and sea. The men were

already astir and anxious for breakfast. The mate brought out some cabin stores, which he gave to Rice, with instructions for him to prepare the morning meal at once. After directing Broadrib and Storey to make a general inspection of the ship, including sounding the well again, and be ready to report to him later, he reentered the cabin.

Audrey McRae was waiting for him. She was dressed as usual, like a young sailor lad, but she had folded back her loose shirt so as to bare the wounded shoulder. She faced the mate bravely and he devoted himself to his somewhat delicate task with the same courage. Not the most veteran practitioner of medicine could have been more impersonally professional in his treatment than the young sailor.

Yet, to touch the white and dainty skin of the girl's shoulder gave him a thrill which he had never imagined he could experience. Indeed, of the two, he was by far the more agitated. Color came and went in his cheeks in a way that would not have been unbecoming in the girl herself. His voice and his hands trembled not a little, though he strove valiantly to control them both. He centered his gaze upon his task, scarcely daring to look at her till it was completed.

She, on the contrary, took advantage of his confusion, to study him as openly, as deeply. That very nervousness was an evidence of what he thought of her, a tribute to the feelings evoked by his realization of her sex and her presence aboard the ship. And she delighted in it. As a boy, she had not seemed especially precocious in seamanship and sea lore for her age;

but as a woman she was far in advance of it, apparently. So she studied him intently and with growing pleasure during the whole undertaking.

The fact that her secret was discovered and concealment was no longer either possible or necessary, added to her calmness and satisfaction. Dressed as a boy, considered as a boy, treated as a boy, she had hitherto in some measure at least thought as a boy and acted as one. Now that the mate knew she was a woman, a change, subtle but perceptible, had come over her. Clothes did not make the difference they once had done. She now thought as a woman; not so much so as she would later, but still with an already marked difference. Her anomalous relation to the mate suddenly became definite. She realized that fully, though he as yet did not completely apprehend it. To him she was still half boy, to herself she was altogether woman; and what was more decisive, he was no longer half friend, instructor, superior, companion. He was altogether man, who was to be—what?

For the rest she held her garment drawn tightly across her breast and submitted quietly to his ministrations, until he had completed the dressing. The wound was healing rapidly, no inflammation had set in, and in a few days she would be completely well. The mate's treatment had been simple, but good. She found time to wonder a little at the exceeding gentleness and delicacy with which the rough-handed seaman handled her still tender shoulder, as well as at his skill with the bandaging.

Finally he heaved a long sigh—compounded of re-

lief and regret—and declared that he could do no more. And for that, in spite of his nervousness, he was very sorry. He helped her on with her light pea-jacket, lest she might take cold in the wound, and waited until she had buttoned her shirt at the neck. She picked up her black silk neckerchief thereafter and handed it to him. He tied it for her with extra care, lingering as much as he dared over the duty she had devolved upon him. He wanted to kiss the face, upturned toward him so fascinatingly, but he did not dare.

The day before he would unceremoniously have set the boy at any seaman's task suited to his years and strength, but now he felt that he could not have issued an order to the girl to save his life. Things were different. There had been a reversal of their relative situations. The big, powerful sailor was quite prepared to take the orders he could not give. Yet, to all outward intents and purposes, Rey looked exactly as she had looked throughout the cruise—a handsome, slender, slightly undersized boy, smiling at him with her bright blue eyes. She was dressed like any and every other sailor lad, and, but for her unusual good looks, appeared to be what she purported to be—a saucy boy! Yet, the loose, flowing white trousers, the short blue jacket, the laced cap covering her short, unmanageable golden curls, the flowing tie, her coquetish air spoke woman—nay, cried it aloud. The mate wondered how he could have been so blind. And now many things that had puzzled him, were plain.

He had yet to hear her story. She was willing to tell it, indeed, anxious to do so; to set herself right

with this man. And during the pauses for rest in the arduous days that followed, she related it, bit by bit, until he knew it all.

For the present he decided, finding her cheerfully acquiescent in any of his decisions, that nothing was to be said to the men aboard. At the proper time they must be told, but until that time came, it would be better to say nothing. And thus her story ran:

Captain Norris, instead of being alone in the world, as everybody aboard ship at least had believed, had been blessed with a young and charming sister. The captain, as was not unusual with shipmasters, men whose lightest word was law in their ships, had been conjugated in the imperative mood. His sister, Audrey Norris, shared his imperialism. There had been frequent clashes of will between them, culminating, according to the story Audrey McRae told Mr. Clough, in an open rupture between the brother and sister over the latter's marriage.

The lucky man was not the one selected by her brother as a suitable husband for the lovely but self-willed girl. She had taken advantage of the captain's absence on a voyage to China, to marry the man of her choice.

When Captain Norris returned and learned what she had done, he had refused to see his sister. He even declined to read her letters. The break between them was final and not to be bridged over by any effort on the sister's part. Audrey McRae went her way and Captain Norris his, each believing the separation was forever.

Fate, however, ordered things otherwise. On returning from his last whaling cruise in the Pacific, Captain Norris found awaiting him a letter from a firm of attorneys with whose names he was unfamiliar. The ship's agent who delivered it, told him that it had arrived only the day before.

Captain Norris opened it unsuspectingly and was shocked to find that it announced, in precise legal verbiage, the death of his sister. It appeared that she had been for some years a widow and had been left in very reduced circumstances after the death of her husband. She had, however, left a legacy to the captain. A letter to him from her, which the lawyers begged leave to enclose, would put the captain in full possession of all the facts.

It was with mingled feelings, indeed, that Captain Norris opened the last letter from his sister, with whom he had held no communications for so many years.

Audrey had the letter in her possession, she had read it many times. She fetched it from her ditty box and let the mate read it for himself. It was short, but pregnant with meaning and with a pathetic appeal which would have softened a heart of stone. And for all his hardness, Captain Norris was touched by it.

With faltering hand and in broken words, his sister told him that things had gone ill with her since her husband's death. She touched briefly upon her struggles and sufferings. Being warned by her medical attendant, that her days were numbered, she accepted the situation with the courage of the Norris family; without repining, she addressed herself to the principal

matter in hand. She begged the captain, whose forgiveness and love she had long craved in vain, to think kindly of her in his heart after she had gone. And, as evidence of his willingness to cherish her memory, she solemnly enjoined him to charge himself with the care of her only child, Rey, who would be left otherwise, entirely unprovided for.

The writing grew fainter, the words more broken, obviously, the pauses between sentences and phrases had lengthened. The strength had gone out of the poor woman. She could write no more. She had just managed to scrawl her name beneath this heartfelt appeal.

Captain Norris acted promptly. The next day found him in the little Long Island town where his sister had died. He had been too late for the funeral. He had gone direct to the mean little house at which the letter had been written and had knocked on the door.

Audrey herself, then a young girl just past seventeen, had answered his summons. She told Clough how the weather-beaten old sea captain had stared at her as if he had seen a ghost—from her indisputable likeness to her mother, doubtless! She showed Clough her mother's miniature in confirmation of that.

Captain Norris asked her if she could tell him of the whereabouts of a young lad of about her age, who answered to the name of Rey McRae.

"I am Rey McRae," she had replied, simply and directly.

"But you are a girl!" exclaimed the astonished

captain, starting back in amazement, almost as if he would fain refuse to credit the obvious.

"Most certainly. And why, may I ask, did you think otherwise?" had been her answer.

"Your mother's letter—" he began, holding it out.

She recognized it at once. Indeed, she had assisted and supported her mother when she had written it. She was familiar with the contents.

"She would have written more clearly, but her strength failed—" said the girl, choking back a sob.

The explanation was adequate. The captain stared at her in growing anxiety, which found words at last.

"What on earth am I to do with you, a girl!" he exclaimed.

"You are my mother's brother? My uncle?" she had asked.

"I am."

"She left me to your care?"

"She did."

"Do you forgive my mother? Are you sorry you left her to die alone?" she demanded, with a certain passionate intensity, otherwise she would have none of his aid or care.

The captain had grown older. He had been much alone, after the necessary habit of shipmasters. He had thought deeply of late upon the broken relations between himself and his sister, his only relative, and he had come to a certain conclusion on the voyage which had just ended.

"Deeply do I regret our differences, my child," he began. "I had made up my mind to seek your mother

on my return from this present cruise and ask her forgiveness. This letter told me it was too late," he concluded sadly.

Hard, stern, unyielding, imperious, Captain Norris might be, no one would hesitate to accept his lightest assurance. The girl found his words to ring so true, that she came nearer to him, laid her hand upon his arm in youthful and innocent trust and looked up at him.

"It would have made my mother so happy to have known that," she said simply, and then, after a pause she added, "and perhaps she knows now."

"I hope so," was the captain's reply. "And I mean to make what reparation I can, by fulfilling her last request and looking after you."

Captain Norris was an undemonstrative man, not used to the society of girls or women. Yet, he put his arm around her waist, awkwardly, to be sure and then he bent and kissed her head, with unwonted tenderness, while she sobbed her grief away on his broad breast. Presently she dried her tears and looked up at him.

"You find it difficult to know what to do with me because I am a girl?" she began.

"Yes, it does make it a bit awkward, but we'll find some way to care for you when I am at sea."

"How long are you gone?"

"Two or three years on a whaling cruise, sometimes longer."

"Take me with you," she pleaded. "I am a good sailor, never ill. I can handle a boat. I can——"

"A girl, a woman aboard ship. A female alone with a lot of——"

"But I could go as a boy," she persisted. "I've often gone cruising with my father. He freighted on the Sound and then I always wore a boy's clothes. That's the reason my hair is cut short. Wait——"

She ran away, leaving the captain almost in a daze, which was by no means cleared up when she presented herself to him in the clothes she had afterward worn for over a year in the whaler.

A smile came across his grim features at the metamorphosis. She looked a veritable boy indeed, though added years would naturally make the disguise more difficult to sustain.

"I don't want to lose you, my only relative in the world, now that I've just found you," she declared.

"And you, don't you want me a little—Uncle?"

Yes, he suddenly discovered that he wanted her very much. And that was the way Rey found herself signed to the whaler's articles as ship's boy; and, as an especial protégé of the captain, with a berth aft in the cabin.

Mr. Clough found it a marvelous story indeed. He was very fond of hearing it. He never exhausted its details. He had her tell it to him, over and over again in the long watches they stood together in the days that followed. He was eager for every detail of that past life of the woman so strangely committed to him.

CHAPTER VIII

AWAY FOR VALPARAISO

AFTER two days of the hardest work, that any of the four men had ever put in—which is saying a good deal, for they were all seamen, accustomed to arduous toil—they at last got the *Sharon* into some sort of shape, with which they had perforce to be satisfied. They cut away all the wreckage, spliced the parted standing rigging, rerove the running gear, and out of a spare lower studding sail boom, had managed to rig a jury, or temporary, main topmast. They had used the flying jib boom for a jury main topsail yard. With plenty of spare sails in the sail room—for the *Sharon* was well provided and had lost few heretofore—they bent new courses, new spanker and jib, and used a main topgallant sail for a new main topsail.

Of course, this was a very small spread of canvas for so big a ship, but it was sufficient to send her along at a fairly good rate, heavily laden as she was. It also enabled them to control her motion, even to lay a course by the wind if they so desired and it became necessary, and it was about as much canvas as they could by any possibility have handled—indeed more, unless they had plenty of time for work at the braces.

She was a queer-looking ship when they got through

with her, with patched-up makeshift braces, stays and running and standing rigging, but to a sailor's eye, it all showed skill, resourcefulness, and determination. A good deal of the heavy work had been done the first day, while Audrey rested, by Clough's strict orders. As one man had to be constantly at the wheel, her absence was a great deprivation to them, but Clough would not hear of her doing anything, despite all her pleading. The mate said rightly that the safety of the ship, and their being on her, was due to Rey, for if she had not made that lucky throw of the block from the main top, he would have been killed, and the others would never have been able to board her. What their fate would have been in an open boat, in that wild white squall, they had only to look back to the picture of the other whale-boat, capsized, its crew struggling vainly in the vast seas, fully to comprehend.

None of the others, indeed, wished to disturb the boy. Old Broadrib, who was as big as his name, supplemented his undoubted skill by a giant's strength. Rice and Storey made up in zeal for their lack of a similar physique, and Mr. Clough, with the intuitive knowledge and resourcefulness of a born seaman, was more than equal in value to Broadrib.

Thereafter they got along faster; for one reason, they had enjoyed a good sleep during the night in their watch or watches below, and for another, Rey was feeling so much better that she insisted on taking the wheel. Her wounded shoulder still prevented her from doing any hard work, to which, indeed, she would have been unequal, but in the light breeze prevailing,

for both wind and sea had fortunately died down—the wind almost as quickly as it had risen, and the sea, after a day—she could, without difficulty, manage to control the ship's course, especially as the *Sharon* was under such short canvas and steered easily always.

The evening of the second day found them with every conceivable task completed. Where the fore and main topmasts had gone overboard, a great hole had been broken in the bulwarks. They had even mended that, Clough having some skill with the carpenter's tools. They were well pleased with their work. Indeed, they had got along so much better than they had expected, that they were fairly overjoyed.

No attempt had been made to settle on any future course in view of the pressing nature of present demands, and after supper—a much better supper than the seamen were accustomed to, for Rice with Clough's permission had continued to prepare their meals from the abundant cabin stores—they all came aft for a smoke and sat down around the wheel to talk over the situation.

Naturally, Mr. Clough, being the only remaining officer, took the lead. Under ordinary conditions no officer would have summoned a ship's crew into counsel as to what to do and where to go, but the circumstances were extraordinary. While it would be possible for the four men and Rey to work the big ship into harbor if nothing happened, it would be a tremendous task which would call upon every ounce of their strength, all possible skill and unbounded devotion, and which would be difficult if not impossible in case of any mis-

hap or misfortune. For instance, they could scarcely get the sails off the ship again, and a hard gale would render their position most precarious.

A brand new ship when she cleared from New Bedford, the *Sharon* had stood up under the strains and stresses and batterings of wind and seas remarkably well. They sounded the well every hour and discovered nothing but the natural seepage; bilge water being always to be met with in a wooden ship. They were greatly relieved to find she was tight and without a leak. If they could bring her into port she would be worth thousands of dollars to each one of them. Clough was not quite clear as to what the marine law of salvage was or even how far the action of the two mates and those of the crew who had refused to attempt to recapture the ship would effect their share of the "lay," but he was pretty sure that they had forfeited it. The rewards, therefore, would be great if they could bring the ship home, and the honor would be even greater.

The firm that owned the *Sharon* was liberal and progressive. Mr. Clough was certain that if he saved her he could get a ship of his own for the next cruise and he was fully qualified for so important a command. Circumstances had suddenly made that more desirable than ever. In his secret heart the young man was beginning to plan for two!

It would advance Audrey's fortunes too, for as she was undoubtedly Captain Norris' only heir, her share of the value of the ship and cargo, to say nothing of a possible salvage claim, would be very considerable.

Clough felt bound to obtain as much for her as he could.

"Mates," said the young officer, "you have all stood by me and the *Sharon* loyally. You have shown yourselves men of courage and grit and fine seamen, willing to work, and that I appreciate, and that the owners of the ship, if we can bring her in, are certain to appreciate also. If it hadn't been for you, Rey, we couldn't have got the ship, and if Broadrib and Rice and Storey hadn't boarded her just when they did, I guess even your courage and resourcefulness, my—my boy, wouldn't have staved off the end. As third officer of the ship, of course, I am now in command, the captain and the two mates being lost, and I should have a perfect right to decide on our future course without consulting you or anybody, in which event I know that you would give me loyal support and obedience. But the circumstances are peculiar. I want your counsel and advice. You know perfectly well that this ship is loaded to her capacity with sperm, ambergris and whale bone and that her cargo is worth thousands of dollars. She doesn't look very pretty now," he continued, removing his pipe and glancing aloft at the shattered masts and at the makeshift main topmast, "but as a ship she is worth a hundred wrecks. I am not sure about the law, but I think we will all be entitled to salvage, if we bring her in, and our "lay" will be enormous. For the men who deserted her will have lost their shares. She ought to give each one of us a fair start toward a fortune if we can ever get her back to old New Bedford town."

"You're right there, Mr. Clough," said old Broad-

rib. "An' we're wishful an' anxious to do everythin' we kin to sail her back. In course, we'll obey your orders without questions, carry out your directions to the best of our ability. Am I right, mates?"

"Right you are," said Rice heartily.

"I agree with that," added Storey.

"Well, then, the first thing to be done is to choose and set the watches. I'll appoint Broadrib, here, mate. I am captain. I'll take the starboard watch, and you, Broadrib, the port watch. The four of us will be on deck all the time during the day, but we'll keep regular watches at night."

"How about me, sir," piped up Audrey demurely.

"Well, Rey," said Clough, smiling at her eagerness, "you can be on deck all the day with the rest of us, but at night you'll turn in, at least until that shoulder of yours gets completely well anyway, or unless we need you on account of some emergency."

"I'd like to be in a regular watch and do my regular turn, sir," protested the girl, whose spirit was high, indeed.

But Captain Clough shook his head.

"You won't be forgot or overlooked," he answered. "It was your readiness that saved my life. If that brute had got down into that cabin it would have been the end of me. And I shan't forget your pluck and seamanship in fetching that ensign from the spanker gaff and bending it on to the main royal masthead. We saw the main to'gall'nt s'l on the crosstrees, but that didn't worry us much, although we did take it as some sort of a signal. But when the flag went up,

Union down, we knew there was trouble. Now, Broadrib, take your choice of the men for your watch."

"Rice and Storey is both good men," said old Broadrib, looking at them reflectively. "I can't choose between 'em. I'd jest as leave have one as t'other, an' I wouldn't want to hurt the feelin's of one man by takin' the other."

"Here," said Clough, taking a coin from his pocket. "Heads you get Rice; tails you get Storey."

He spun the coin in the air, caught it and exhibited it.

"Tails it is."

"Storey, you're in my watch," said the old harpooner.

"Rice, you're in mine," chimed in the new captain.

"First time I ever got put in a watch by spinnin' a coin," laughed Rice.

"Well, that matter's settled then," said Clough. "The next thing is what our course will be. What do you think about it?"

"Well, I takes it," answered old Broadrib after a moment of reflection, "that the best thing we can do is to make the South American coast somewheres an' perhaps ship a hand or two to help us work the old hooker 'round the Horn an' back to New Bedford again."

"Aye, you're right there," returned Clough.

"But what part of the South American coast, sir?" asked Rice.

"Why, I takes it, the farther south we goes, the better," answered Broadrib.

"You mean ——" asked Storey.

"Valparaiso," said Clough, who evidently agreed with the harpooner.

"Right-o," said Broadrib. "You can't go farther south than Valparaiso. There ain't no harbor, nor no chance of pickin' up anybody any place else."

"We might fetch away for Callao, Peru, sir. I believe it would be shorter, wouldn't it?" asked Rice.

"Yes," answered Clough, "it certainly would be shorter, but we would have to beat up a large part of the way, and while we can sail by the wind if we have to, even under our present rig, it would be mighty slow progress we would make and——"

"Besides which," said Broadrib, "Callao is still a Spanish port unless them Chileans an' Peruvians have drove 'em out sence we left New Bedford, which ain't likely."

"I think not," said Clough.

"Them Spaniards ain't any too well affected toward the United States. They think it's your example that has set these South Americans off," continued the big Englishman.

"While at Valparaiso," continued Clough, "we are sure of getting friendly treatment. Besides following that course, we'll catch the northeast trade winds presently and that ought to send us along at a great rate."

"There's some speed in the old bucket yet," said Storey. He rose, stepped over to the rail and looked critically down at the water. "I should say she was making all of five knots now in this light breeze."

"Yes, and she'll do better than that if the wind comes stronger, which I hopes it will," said Broadrib.

"Don't hope it will come very much stronger," said Clough, "for if it blew too hard, we would be up against it, certain. Well, then, Valparaiso it is. I thought of that myself, but I am glad you three arrived at the same conclusion. In fact, I worked out the course when I took a shot at the sun this noon and—well, Valparaiso is right over our bowsprit now."

"About how many leagues away do you make it, Cap'n Clough?"

"About eighteen hundred," answered Clough promptly. "I measured it off on the chart, and that is about what it shows."

"And say we average about five knots and a half an hour. How long do you think it will take us to get there?"

"Well, five and a half knots an hour, which I think is rather high, is one hundred and thirty-two miles, or forty-four leagues a day, and that divided into eighteen hundred is about forty days. Add a week or so for leeway and head winds, or calms; say eight weeks.

"That'll be about it," said Broadrib, who was entirely unable to follow the mate's mental figuring, but who was greatly impressed by it.

"Have we food and water enough, sir?" asked Storey.

"Plenty," said Clough. "We are provisioned for thirty men and we only have four men and a—a—boy to provide for."

"You kin count that boy a man when it comes to stowin' away his share of the grub," observed Broadrib.

"Yes, I expect so," laughed Clough at Rey's

indignant look, Broadrib speaking not from any observation, but theoretically and without authority.

"Which I've stopped my growth for some time," answered the harpooner, "but I find it is good for me, too. An' good for the rest of us, hey, mates?"

"You bet it is," said Storey. "It'll be pretty hard to go back to ship's fare after eating cabin fare."

"I guess the cabin's stores will last us all right," said Captain Clough. "You see there were four officers of us aft and Rey, and there are no more on the ship now. Do any of you know anybody in Valparaiso? I wish we had stopped there when we came up, but Captain Norris was so anxious to get his irons into the big fish that he passed it by."

"I know one man there. Leastways, he was there when I left England, an' I come straight to the States from Hull in a packet."

"How did you happen to get on the *Sharon*, you being a Britisher, Broadrib?" asked Clough.

"Well, sir, Captain Howes Norris' grandmother was an English woman. She lived in Hull. I had met up with him once when he was visitin' her as a youngster. He kind a took to me, an' he told me if I ever wanted a ship an' he had one I could get a berth with him. So when I landed in the United States I drifted up to New Bedford an', as luck would have it, found Captain Norris then ready to sail with the *Sharon*, an' signed on. He was glad enough to have me, sence I had been in these waters afore. In fact, I once made a cruise on a whaler called the *Seringapatam*."

"Why, by George!" exclaimed Clough, "I remember that whaler. We captured her when I was a midshipman in the navy on the *Essex*, on Commodore Porter's famous cruise."

"You sartin did that," said old Broadrib. "But I never knowed you'd been on the *Essex*, sir."

"Yes, but I didn't happen to be one of the prize crew of the *Seringapatam*, else we would have met each other. I was on the *Essex, Junior*, afterward, but I was on the frigate herself when she was attacked by the *Phoebe* and the *Cherub*."

"I was ashore, a prisoner on parole, but I seed it all. It certainly was a great fight," said Broadrib.

"Yes, your ships caught us at a disadvantage. They were a heavy overmatch to us, but, though we were beaten, we were not disgraced."

"That you weren't," said the harpooner, "an' I admits the disadvantage. But you see Cap'n Hillyar was sent out to git you, an' git you he did. You'd played hob with our whalin' interests in the South Seas, an' sence the war ended your ships has been crowdin' ourn mighty hard in huntin' the big fish," continued the Englishman, giving the common sailor name to the whale, which, of course, is not a fish at all.

"Well, we won't bear any malice on that account," said Clough. "Our countries are at peace now, and I hope they will always remain so."

"That's me, too," said the big Englishman.

"You were saying that you knew someone in Valparaiso, Mr. Broadrib," began Rey, who had listened with deep interest.

"*Mister Broadrib!*" laughed the seaman.

"Yes, certainly," answered the other. "Aren't you the second officer of the ship now?"

"Lord love you, lad, I'm jest plain old Bill Broadrib, same's I was afore. Don't go to misterin' me. There ain't no misters on this ship 'cept Mr. Clough, Cap'n Clough, if you please, youngster," said old Broadrib.

"Who is it that you know in Valparaiso? Anybody of importance?" asked Clough, smiling at the turn of the conversation.

"Well, I should say he is of importance," said the sailor.

"And how do you happen to know him?" asked the mate, or the captain, rather, to give him his new and undoubted rank, wondering that a plain seaman like Broadrib should know anyone of importance.

"I fought under him for four years; that is to say, I was bo's'n's mate on a brig he commanded, an' when he went from one vessel to another, he thought enough of me to take me with him. I'd have been with him yet if he hadn't been kicked out of the British Navy."

"You mean——"

"I mean Lord Cochrane, the Earl of Dundonald."¹

¹ Thomas, Lord Cochrane, tenth Earl of Dundonald (b. 1775- d. 1860), was one of the most gallant and successful sea officers of the English Navy, or of any other navy. His wonderful exploits and inventions were so many and so varied as to give him a unique place in naval history. Unfortunately, he mingled in politics, was elected to parliament, became involved in conflicts with the party in power, charged his commanding officer, Admiral Lord Gambier, with negligence and cowardice, became involved in financial difficulties through speculation, was made a scapegoat by political enemies and was imprisoned, disgraced and finally dismissed from the British Navy. Thereafter, he took service successfully with Chile, when it was fighting for its independence against Spain; with Brazil, when it was fight-

"I did hear that he had been made an admiral in the Chilean Navy," observed Captain Clough.

"You're right, sir. I was hopin' you'd touch at Valparaiso an' I could git my discharge from the *Sharon* an' ship with him. If there's goin' to be any fightin' on the South American coast, I know that that big red-headed earl is bound to be in it. I'm an old man, an' I've served under some great seamen in my day, an' I've been in some tidy battles, but I ain't had my belly full of fightin' yet. Why, in so far as he could oblige a common sailor like me, I'm sartin he'd do anything for me, so if we gits to Valparaiso an' he is there, our course'll be easy."

"Broadrib," said Clough gravely, "what you say is very interesting, and I have no doubt Lord Cochrane, or the Earl of Dundonald, to give him his latest title, will give us a helping hand for your sake, but unless I can get some mighty good men to take your place, and I would need about four I think, I would feel mighty sorry to lose you."

"You ain't goin' to lose me, Cap'n Clough," said the old sailor heartily. "I could ask for my discharge from a stout ship with a full crew, but I ain't one that's goin' to desart a ship in this yere situation, nor a man that's really saved my life an' the lives of these other youngsters here by his courage an' darin.' I'll stay

ing to free itself from Portugal; and with Greece struggling with Turkey. In after years he was fully exonerated from all the charges against him and was restored to the English Navy with every possible honor and promotion. His services under all four flags were most distinguished. He was the greatest of sailors of fortune and only lacked opportunity to have made a name for himself worthy to be placed alongside that of Drake, Blake or Nelson.—C. T. B.

with you till you gits to New Bedford if we don' git wrecked on the way. Then I'll contrive some way to get back to the admiral, if he is still flyin' his flag afloat."

"Good," said Captain Clough, rising. "Rice and I will take the first watch." He pulled out his silver timepiece. "It's eight bells now," he continued. "You and Storey turn in and we'll call you at midnight. You go too, Rey. Tomorrow night we'll get a chance to hear some stories of those fighting days of yours with that admiral, Broadrib. I have heard some people say he was the strangest character that ever sailed a ship."

"You're right there, Cap'n Clough," said the old harpooner, rising to his feet. "I kin tell you some things that'll make you laugh fit to start a butt in your midship plankin' about the time when me an' him was fighting the Spaniards an' the French an'——"

"Well, we'll look forward to that in the second dog watch tomorrow. Good night."

"Good night, sir. Come along, Storey," said the old seaman, turning to go forward.

"We'll all bunk aft in the cabin for the rest of this cruise," said the young captain. "Broadrib, you take the mate's room; Storey, you can have mine; Rice, you can take the second mate's; I'll take the captain's, and Rey, you can bunk in your own just as you have. We'll call you at midnight, men."

CHAPTER IX

A KISS IN THE DARK

THE young captain elected to take the wheel himself for the first night watch, sending Rice forward to the forecastle to keep a bright lookout and be in readiness for any demand. The wind being on the quarter and the ship under short canvas, she steered easily. Barring a touch of the helm now and then, Clough had little to do. He stood easily, grasping a spoke with one hand, leaning over the wheel, his eyes glancing at the compass from time to time to see that the *Sharon* kept her course.

The night was quiet, cloudless, the sky brilliant with the bright stars of the south latitudes. The breeze was moderate, just fresh enough to dispel the lingering heat of the recent day, and give a fairly good way to the ship, to say nothing of contributing to the comfort of her watch of two, tired out by the hard work of the long, hot day in that tropic weather.

The new captain's thoughts covered a wide range. There was the ship. Well did he realize the difficult, not to say dangerous, nature of the task that lay before him. Broadrib was a man of vast and varied experience, to be sure; he more nearly than any other understood the magnitude of their undertaking. Rice and Storey were good seamen, intelligent and capable be-

yond their station doubtless, but happy-go-lucky sailors, young enough not to look very far into the future or to care very much what it might demand of them.

For the rest there was Rey—and she was a woman. For the moment she bulked larger and more important in his eyes than the great whaler with her thousands of barrels of the richest sperm oil and her other valuable cargo of whalebone and ambergris.

Captain Clough began to speculate a little wildly about her; to see visions and to dream dreams around the girl. If he succeeded in bringing the *Sharon* back to New Bedford it would mean riches, according to the modest standards of those days, for him, and for Rey. And it would certainly get him a ship to command, with all the potentialities of that position.

His thoughts took another turn. Audrey was undoubtedly Captain Norris' only heir. The captain had been a saver rather than a spender. Clough never doubted but that a tidy bit of property in one shape or another awaited the girl's claiming at New Bedford. She was of age now, having long since passed her eighteenth birthday, and could enter into immediate and undisputed possession so soon as he had brought her home.

This reflection, however, did not give him the unalloyed satisfaction of his former thoughts. He himself had saved but little, and although his lay of the cruise and whatever salvage he could claim would amount to more than he could have hoped to accumulate in a long time, it would not make him financially a match for the heiress of Captain Howes Norris. In

other respects the match, upon which his heart had been set ever since his discovery of her sex, would not be an unequal one.

Benjamin Clough came of an old and substantial New England family of great respectability. Many of his forebears had followed the sea, and some of them had acquired riches in pursuit of that profession. But the war of 1812 and some bad speculations thereafter had reduced that branch to which Clough belonged almost to poverty. Forced by the paucity of his financial resources, and entirely dependent upon his own labors for a livelihood, he had given up his promising career as a naval officer and entered the merchant marine. Therein his rise had been rapid. If he succeeded in bringing the *Sharon* home, and if he were rewarded therefor with a ship, he would have reached command rank at the early age of twenty-four; and aided by a little good fortune he might hope to go far. Eventually he might properly aspire to Audrey McRae's hand—but not yet.

He felt that honor demanded that he keep his passion to himself. And yet that very passion urged him to speak out. It was an intolerable situation, especially for a man of his decided temperament. But one ray of comfort could he see. If he could not in honor declare himself to her, no one else could, at least not so long as they were on the ship together. He had the field to himself. Nor did he have any idea as to the young woman's feelings toward him.

It had not taken a second for that kindly, protecting, proprietary liking he had entertained for the young

lad, who had been thrown so much in his company as a boy, to develop into something warmer and more devoted, when he discovered the truth. But whether or not she still cherished for him no more than a boy's frank admiration and devotion for a young man who had been kind to him, he could not tell. He wasn't skilled in dealing with women at best, and he was completely at sea as to her regard for him. He was a modest man where women were concerned, for all he had plenty of that calm assurance so necessary to command upon the sea, and without which no great sailor ever was.

Audrey McRae had dutifully gone to her cabin like the rest at the order of the new captain. She had undressed and had regularly turned in, but she had been unable to sleep. After a time she got out of her berth and tiptoed to the door of her room, which she opened with due caution. As she listened she heard above the creaking and groaning of the timber, invariable accompaniment to the movement of a wooden ship in the waters, the deep breathing of Storey and the heavy snoring of the old harpooner, which told her they were both in a sound sleep. She knew that Captain Clough would be at the helm alone and Rice would naturally stand his watch forward on the fore-castle, quite out of sight in the darkness from the man at the wheel.

A daring design came into her mind therefor, and she at once proceeded to carry it out. The huge old-fashioned sea chest lashed to ring bolts in her cabin contained much more even than a well-appointed young

sailor's outfit. She laughed to herself as she rummaged among its contents until she came upon what she wanted. Thereafter she was busy for some time before the small mirror fixed to the bulkhead of her cabin and which she illuminated by a candle lantern which was part of her cabin furniture—an unusual privilege extended her by her uncle.

When she had finished her self-appointed task, she tiptoed again through the main cabin into the captain's vacant room, and took thence from a hook to which it hung in his armoire, or wardrobe, a capacious boat cloak, which she threw around her shoulders. Then with the same caution and skill she noiselessly passed through the main cabin once more and slipped out on deck, having disturbed nobody.

Captain Clough was endowed by nature with unusually keen faculties, which had been much enhanced by constant usage, but he was so deeply engrossed in his thoughts that he did not hear her light footfall on the deck abaft him. She realized that she was as yet undetected, and she paused accordingly in the deeper shadow cast by the break of the poop, to study him unobserved.

If the young man who was a prey to reflections at once bitter and sweet could have enjoyed a fair sight of the girl he loved, his anxieties would have been dispelled as if by magic. Her presence unsuspected, she allowed herself to give vent to her feelings so far as was possible without betraying her presence. Her breath came much quicker, her young and still somewhat immature breast rose and fell more rapidly, her

lips parted a little, her eyes shone in the darkness like the stars in the black canopy of the sky overhead. "Beauty's ensign" was in truth advanced in her cheeks. There could be no doubt that she loved him—not with the admiration and loyalty of a boy, but with a woman's deeper and more ardent feeling.

His vagrant, unconsidered, hastily withdrawn touch upon her when she lay senseless in his arms in the cabin had awakened even in her unconscious self, feelings and emotions with which she had long suspected she had become possessed, but which she had never allowed herself to realize. A boy she had appeared, as a boy she had been treated; he and everyone had believed her so to be, and a boy she had determined to remain until the end of the cruise.

But she had awakened—with the young officer bending over her in amazement, almost terror—to a sudden realization that, so far at least as he was concerned, the masquerade was over. She had awakened to more than that. She knew at once that she loved him not as a boy but as a woman. No thought of any disparity in rank or fortune entered her mind to disturb her. She was his if he wanted her. But did he want her? That was a perturbing question.

He had liked her extremely as a boy. His treatment of her as a woman had been unexceptionable, too unexceptionable almost. Something had to be done to clear up the situation. She felt that somehow the initiative must come from her. So she had made her plan that night and was now about to try it.

It was a luxury to stand unobserved and dwell upon him with her glance, to feel his nearness, to be conscious, himself not so, of a beloved presence in that heavenly night. Yet she must move to break the spell—to continue it? The next few moments would determine. She glided forward and touched him lightly on the arm.

In the dim light cast by the binnacle lamp, helped by the faint illumination from the stars overhead, the captain became aware of her presence. He could even make out her smiling lips, her bright eyes. For the rest she was shrouded in the boat cloak which enveloped her from head to foot.

"You," he whispered, recovering himself and glad in his surprise. "Why are you not asleep?"

"I couldn't sleep. I came on deck to talk to you."

There was a pause at this, ominous to the girl. Clough could not trust himself to speak. It was so sudden and he was so unprepared.

"Don't you want me?" she whispered softly, half turning away in great disappointment after waiting in vain for his word.

"Want you!" exclaimed the young man softly, but with a sudden vehemence which set her heart bounding again. "O Rey, Miss, I mean—you can't think how much I do want you."

She was still turning as if minded to return to the cabin despite his words. He reached out and caught hold of the boat cloak. With a quick movement she released it, stepped clear of its folds, leaving it in his grasp. There was light enough to see her. In his

surprise the young officer let go the wheel—a cardinal sin in a seaman—and stood staring. For it was not Rey, the young lad who confronted him on the deck in that heavenly night on that quiet ship, but Audrey, the young woman, clothed in a dress proper to her sex, which she had carefully preserved in her chest, for what emergency she had not known.

“Good God!” exclaimed the captain, not in the least irreverently. “I never thought to see you so.”

“And why not?”

“There is no reason, of course, but——”

“Don’t you—like me—this way?” She asked in pretty coquetry, turning about slowly the while as if to give him the benefit of a view of her from every angle.

“Aft there! Is anything wrong, sir” came a rough hail from the forecabin.

“No, why do you ask?” answered the captain, who very well knew what was wrong.

He seized the wheel again, revolved it rapidly, with his eyes on the compass card, while Audrey hastily picked up the cloak, wrapped it around her and made ready for flight.

“Ship’s head falling off, sir,” answered Rice.

“I must have nodded over the wheel,” replied Clough readily.

“Aye, aye, sir. Shall I come aft and relieve you for a trick?”

“No. I’m all right now. Stay where you are and keep a bright lookout ahead.”

“Aye, aye, sir.”

"That was a near thing," said the captain, turning to the girl, who again laid aside the cloak. "You actually made me let go the wheel!"

"You didn't say whether you liked me—this way, or not," she persisted, determined to get an answer.

"Like you? That way and every way, Rey—Miss—I mean," was his ready and fervent answer.

"Well, then, why are you so formal with me?"

"Formal?"

"You call me 'Miss' and you treat me so differently. Why not Rey before the others and Audrey when we are alone?"

"But you were a boy before——"

"What difference does that make?"

"All the difference in the world. You are not a boy but a woman, my former captain's niece, almost his daughter, part owner of this ship——"

"I wish I had stayed a boy then," she interrupted. "We were such good friends. You seemed to like me so much and I was so proud and glad, but now——"

"It's not that I like you less, Miss—Audrey"—there was a sufficient pause between the two words to give her pleasure—"now that you are a woman, but things are so different."

"Why are they?" she asked, coming very near him.

"Because I—you—oh, don't tempt me," he pleaded, desperately, trying to turn his head away, or to withdraw from her, an impossible task because she had caught him between the forward and after wheels of the steering gear, the *Sharon* being provided with a double wheel.

"Tempt you to what?" she asked with charming archness. She could not feel strange with this young man with whom she had lived in such pleasant association and intimacy in the narrow confines of a ship for so long a time.

Captain Clough stared at her, wishful to answer, yet afraid. He would never have believed that clothes could make so great a difference in a human being. He had not given any particular thought to Rey's appearance while he believed her a boy, save to note that she was an unusually good-looking lad, albeit a rather delicate one. But then, in that lonely hour, in that soft southern night, Audrey McRae appeared to him, and would have looked so to almost any man, too beautiful for words. She had not lost the feminine art of adorning herself to the best advantage with the means at hand through long disuse of it. And she had the greatest interest then to make the most of the undoubted charm she possessed. She was not a small woman; she looked larger and more splendid in her woman's garb than as a boy. It flashed into Clough's mind that she would be an ideal wife for a sailor.

In everything she was different from what she had been. True, her hair, beautifully golden and curly, was still short, but a ribbon about it added the feminine touch. Her dress was cut rather low at the neck, and although the opening was partly filled by a bit of lace and linen, he could still see the dazzling whiteness that had aroused his admiration when he had so uncereemoniously profaned its sanctity, albeit so ignorantly

and innocently, a few days since. The dress had color, blue, he decided, swiftly appraising her in the starlight, which hid so much and suggested so much. Happening to glance down at her feet, he noticed that the plain, substantial buckled shoe she wore habitually had been discarded for foolish feminine slippers, small enough to be in good proportion to her figure, if not so small as the infatuated man fancied them. Daylight would have shown much that was lacking in the dress according to the strict canons of the fashions of the day. For instance, Audrey had not been able to reencompass herself in stays, having moved freely so long without them. Also she had become larger in the waist and chest in her boylike liberty. It had been a work of difficulty for her to get into the outgrown frock and fasten it upon her person. She would have given up the attempt had not so much, as she fancied, been at stake.

The young man did not answer her question. She was a determined young woman, else she had never forced her uncle to receive her aboard the ship and sanction her disguise. When the silence, which she found as delicious as he found it unbearable, had continued as long as she thought proper, she repeated her question insistently.

“Tempt you to what?”

And it was not so much her words as her manner of innocent abandon—after all she was very young and frank and inexperienced, as well as very much in love with the man for whom she could entertain as much respect as feeling—which broke down his self-

control. She moved nearer to him, having fairly caught him, so that escape there was none, unless he roughly thrust her aside. She smiled at him; she laid her firm, boyish hand on his arm again. She was suddenly become irresistible. Benjamin Clough could struggle no longer. In his turn he moved a step to meet her. He had been clinging, as ship to sheet anchor, to the wheel with both hands. He released one spoke and freed one arm, and laid his hand on her shoulder. She did not resent it or shrink back — on the contrary!

“Tempt me to tell you I love you — I — O Audrey——”

“But do you?”

“From the moment you awoke in my arms and I knew you were a woman.”

“I’m so glad,” said the girl simply. “I wanted to hear you say that. I was afraid you didn’t. Thank you so much,” she added quaintly, and then——

Well, when the young man came to his senses she was gone. He was alone upon the quarter deck. But he could still feel the pressure of her lips upon his own, for she had boldly and suddenly kissed him, and then, before he could catch her in his arms and press her to his heart, she had fled. But she had kissed him. The woman he loved had volunteered that exquisite caress. Life, the ship, the sea, the world, would never be the same to him. His impulse had been to let go the wheel and follow her. He resisted that. In the first place it was his duty to remain at that wheel; in the second place he felt that the command of the affair between them had been lodged where it ought to be,

in the woman's hands. He would leave the future ordering of their lives to her now that he had confessed that he loved her, and now that her kiss had told him so much as to her own response.

It was a happy young officer indeed who hung over the wheel for the remainder of his watch in that divine night in the South Seas. A difficult task to bring the *Sharon* and her now doubly precious cargo safe home? Nonsense! He could have carried the ship to the stars themselves, alone, unaided, if she would only come forth and kiss him again!

CHAPTER X

OLD BROADRIB SPINS A YARN

SAILORS are usually light-hearted, care-free, happy-go-lucky people. The trade wind held fair, the breeze was brisk, the ship moved along easily, there were no clouds upon the horizon, all hands were in a cheerful mood. There was little work to do—in fact, nothing at all except tend the braces and steer the ship and provide the fare. What might loom in the future gave nobody any great amount of concern.

Captain Clough was young, the girl he loved had kissed him, and although since that delectable night he had not been able to secure any private conversation with her, so charmingly elusive had she proved, he knew that sooner or later he would enjoy another opportunity. So he bided his time contentedly enough, hugging his secret, and sometimes surprising a glance from her eye that told him many pleasant things. Yet that he could not see her alone kept him in a state of anxiety and anticipation not so enjoyable to him as to her.

The men were well fed and better lodged than ever before. They really were enjoying themselves hugely on the voyage. They had not the slightest suspicion of the sex of Rey, and as for her, she was having the time of her life.

She found it delicious to tantalize the young man who had domineered over her so long, albeit he had never exerted his authority unpleasantly. She was young enough to be full of fun, and she found the amazing situation most agreeable to her vanity and to her affection. She had Clough's secret as he had her secret, but he did not have her—not yet. She bent all her energies to avoiding any secret interview at which she might lose her vantage, and sometimes she nearly drove the young officer crazy.

The sailors were good men and true. The two young down-Easterners were men of unusual intelligence. Old Broadrib, originally from a rough class not quite so high socially and intellectually, had been softened and mellowed by his long association with the others. They lived aft in the cabin in a certain equality, but they did not take advantage of that fact by any undue familiarity or disrespect. It would have been idle and foolish for Clough to have maintained the reserve or to have assumed the privileges of a full-fledged captain under the circumstances, and he had too much good sense to attempt that.

It was the habit of the little party to get together around the wheel after supper to beguile the last hour of the dog watch with pleasant conversation as they smoked their pipes—all but Rey—preparatory to setting the watch for the night and turning in.

“So you see,” concluded Clough one pleasant evening, after a long and vivid account of the famous battle in which the *Essex* had been destroyed, “I know Valparaiso harbor pretty well. I have sailed in it and I

have swam in it. I will never forget the looks of it after that battle between the *Essex* and the *Phoebe*, to say nothing of the *Cherub*. It is not likely to fade out of my memory, boy though I was at the time."

"That's a great yarn o' your'n, Cap'n Clough," observed Broadrib. "It was certainly one great, fine battle. I was a prisoner ashore, an' perhaps I could see it better than you people who were in the thick of the fightin'."

"And we would have won it, too," said Clough, "if Captain Hillyar hadn't taken us at such a disadvantage."

"Well, sir, I don't know about that, savin' your presence," said Broadrib warmly, if respectfully. "The *Phoebe* was a smart ship, an' Cap'n Hillyar was a fine officer, to say nothing of the *Cherub*."

"We beat you most every time we fought with you in the war of 1812," put in Audrey.

"Not allus, not allus," returned old Broadrib. "Remember the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon*."

"Yes, but Captain Lawrence's ship wasn't——"

"Steady, steady," said Clough, interposing to calm the troubled waters. "It is all over now. We are all good friends, especially on this ship. Remember we're of the same blood and——"

"Right you are, Cap'n Clough," said old Broadrib heartily. "I believe you people once fought the Frenchies, didn't you?"

"Yes, we had a little mix-up a score of years back, about 1800."

"An' of course you came off first best?"

"I believe so. My father was a shipmate of old

Commodore Truxtun's. He knew John Barry well, and he had even seen the great Paul Jones when he was a boy."

"Well, then, we kin talk about fightin' the French without hurtin' nobody's feelin's, can't we?"

"I guess so," laughed the young captain. "By the way, Broadrib, you were going to tell us about that red-headed admiral friend of yours."

"So I was," said the old man, knocking the ashes out of his pipe as he settled himself for a long yarn.

"I have heard something about him," remarked Rice, as Broadrib looked meditatively up toward the sky, as if to collect his thoughts.

"So have I," chimed in Storey.

"I guess everybody has," added Clough.

"I haven't," said Audrey.

"Well, you're a leetle too young yet, but you're goin' to hear about him now, my lad," said old Broadrib, who was very fond of Rey, as they all were. "It wasn't so many years ago when I was made bo's'n's mate of a leetle brig-o'-war called the *Speedy*. She warn't well named either, for she was a stiff old tub, an' almighty slow. The only way you could git any speed out of her was to clap on sail until her canvas was like to jerk the masts out of her. Her armament was nothin' but popguns, her cap'n was a young lieutenant named Cochrane, Thomas Cochrane. He was a lord, too, an' now he's by way of bein' an earl, the Earl of Dundonald they calls him, but to the old salts who served under him he'll always be Lord Cochrane. I remembers him well. He was a great, tall, lanky sort

of a man with a shock of fiery red hair that no paint, or grease, or powder could ever slick down; an' a mighty handsome face, with a big nose an' a pair of piercin' gray eyes. He was strong as a bull, too. An' the best seaman I ever sailed with—savin' your presence, Cap'n Clough. He was so tall that when he stood up in his cabin he had to take the deck skylight off to git head room! Why, sir, an' mates, I've actually seed him a shavin' hisself in the mornin', layin' his hot water basin on the deck, him a standin' in the cabin starin' over the hatchway into a lookin' glass which he propped up agin the coamings. It was a funny sight. The brig was a triflin' affair."

"What sort of a battery did she carry?" asked Clough.

"Fourteen four-pound guns, sir. Seven of 'em to a broadside," answered the harpooner. "I've often heerd the red-headed fire eater say he could stow away a whole broadside in the tail pockets of his coat, an' I guess he could—fourteen pounds in each pocket, though it would make settin' down difficult! I think they give him the brig to get rid of him. He was allus gittin' into trouble. He was a hard man to handle. No cap'n wanted him on his ship. He had too many ideas of his own which didn't take with older officers, an' I guess he was inclined to be insubordinate an' hard to control. He had a fierce temper, too, 'specially when he was crossed, which was never done by nobody on the brig—no, sir, not if you know'd him like we did! But he treated his officers an' men fine. He knew jest how to handle 'em, an' he hadn't been

on board the *Speedy* a week afore we was ready to do anythin' for him, to go anywhere with him. We jest worshiped him. He was hot-headed an' peppery, too. Never hesitated to speak his mind free; an' that ingenious! Lord! I remembers one day we was cruisin' off the harbor of Palamós, an' we'd jest bin combin' the Spanish coast, capturin' coaster after coaster, an' ship after ship. Why, every man's pockets was fairly bustin' with prize money. I don't know how he done it, but he seemed to git more speed out of the tub than anyone else who'd ever tried her. He'd carry sail in a half gale of wind till the masts was snappin' an' bendin' like coach whips, but nothin' ever give 'way. Well, where was I?"

"You were off the harbor of Palamós, Mate," answered Storey.

"Aye, aye, so I was. We'd been goin' up an' down the coast, enterin' harbors, cuttin' out boats, an' actin' as impident an' free like as if we was backed up by the ships of the line. There was three or four Spanish cruisers lyin' at anchor there, an' they'd heerd about the *Speedy*, an' they rather suspicioned that we was her," continued the old man, with his usual disregard of grammar. "We wasn't showin' no flag, of course, an' by an' by they decided they'd send a frigate out to look us over, so a big whale of a ship called the *Gamo*——"

"How did you find out her name, Mr. Broadrib?" asked Audrey.

"We took her arterwards," answered the old harpooner, chuckling at the recollection. "She made sail,

slipped her moorin's, an' came out to investigate us. Well, we was pretty well loaded. We had been takin' a lot of prizes, an' had a good many prisoners aboard, an' a lot of stuff from vessels that had been driv ashore an' wrecked, an' we couldn't make no speed at all. Besides, I'd often heerd the cap'n say the thing he hated most of all was to run away from the enemy. He decided on a bold course. He says to his young lieutenant—fine young fellow, too—'I guess we'll just stand in and see what this Spanish frigate wants of us.'

"'Surely, m'lord,' says Mr. Parker, the young first luff—I was standin' right aft at the con, an' heerd the whole conversation—'you ain't intendin' to fight a ship of thirty guns with this brig?'

"'Oh, I don't know,' says Cochrane kinder keerless-like, 'a stout English brig like this ought to be a match for any kind of a Spanish frigate afloat.'

"'Oh, yes, m'lord,' returned the lieutenant, quite sarcastic, 'I suppose seven four-pound guns in broadside is a pretty fair match for a dozen long twelves, to say nothin' of a few eighteens an' sixes, an' mebbe a twenty-four-pounder.'

"With that his lordship looks at the lieutenant an' laughs.

"'I guess you're right,' he says, most cheerful, 'but what can I do? Would you have me strike the flag?'

"'Never,' says the lieutenant.

"'An' yet they'd sink us with a broadside,' says m'lord.

"'Quite so,' says the lieutenant.

“‘Therefore, I’ll have to try a trick,’ says m’lord.

“‘A trick it will be,’ says the lieutenant.

“‘With that I busts out laughin’, an’ Lord Cochrane he shoots a glance at me an’ says, most stern an’ fierce, ‘What in blank are you laughin’ at, you old shellback?’

“‘I’m jest thinkin’ how mad them Spaniards will be when you play that there trick on them, m’lord,’ says I.

“‘What trick?’ says my lord.

“‘Lord love your honor,’ says I, ‘how should I know what trick you are goin’ to play on ’em. But knowin’ your lordship as I does, I knows it’ll be a good one.’

“‘You see,’ says m’lord, turnin’ to Lieutenant Parker. ‘How could I give up the brig an’ disapp’int men like old Broadrib, who trusts me? Now, Mr. Parker, you jest send someone below and fish up that Danish quartermaster we took out of that last Spanish ship where he had been made prisoner, an’,’ he says, ‘git me his uniform from off him. Broadrib,’ he says, as the lieutenant turns away, ‘do you know the Danish flag?’

“‘Not me, sir,’ says I.

“‘Well, he walked up to the flag locker and pulled out a flag.

“‘That’ll be it,’ he says. ‘You bend that on to the halliards, an’ when I gives the order, h’ist away.’

“‘An’ then he called a young seaman and says, ‘See that yeller pennant there?’

“‘Yes, yer honor,’ says the young seaman, which his name was Higgs, I well remembers.

“‘Well,’ he says, ‘Higgs’—he knowed everybody

on board, of course. That was part of his power. He could call us all by name. He says, 'Well, Higgs, when I gives the word, you h'ist that yeller flag at the main.'

"'Aye, aye, m'lord,' says Higgs, him an' me gittin' the flags bent on proper.

"Pretty soon Lieutenant Parker come back with the Danish quartermaster, half naked an' protestin' violent.

"'Now, Mr. Parker,' says Lord Cochrane, grinnin' at the Dane, 'gimme that man's uniform.'

"With that he grabs it an' dives below, after tellin' someone to cover up the Dane till he'd got through with the uniform, an' pretty soon he comes out with the Danish uniform on. You could laugh with the cap'n, but it wasn't safe to laugh at him. But I nearly bust agin when I saw him, an' so did lots of others, only we didn't let him see us, not by no means, for the Dane was a smallish man, an' fat, an' his uniform wasn't built for a man like his lordship, though he'd got into it somehow.

"'Tight fit,' he says to the lieutenant, grinnin' at him as he spoke.

"'Yes, sir, but it sets off your figure fine,' was Mr. Parker's reply, which he done it without crackin' a smile or turnin' a hair, though I never seed how he could.

"His lordship shot a glance at him, but Mr. Parker kep' as solemn as a church, an' so the cap'n walked for'ard. He finds it pretty hard goin', too, his breeches bein' so tight. Well, he takes his stand by the gangway, an' he brings the Dane with him, dressed decent

an' proper now; leastwise covered with a boat cloak. Then he orders Mr. Parker to heave to the brig. When the Spanish frigate got near us she hove to herself, up to wind'ard of us, an' dropped a boat overboard which was rowed down to investigate. Jest as soon as they come within hailin' distance, Cap'n Cochrane he leaned over an' whispered to the Dane. I never seed a man's face change so quick as his'n did. He laughed all over hisself. He'd been starin' at the frigate, feelin' pretty gloomy at the prospeck of bein' back in a Spanish prison agin, but he hollered out, half in Danish, half in Spanish.

“‘Boat ahoy!’

“‘Ahoy the brig!’ the boat officer calls back in Spanish, tellin' his men to lay on their oars.”

“Do you know Spanish, Broadrib?” asked Clough.

“Well, I've picked up enough of it to tell what's bein' said gener'ly,” answered old Broadrib. “You see, I larned it in that war. I understood all that passed.”

“Heave ahead then.”

“‘Have you got a doctor you can lend us?’ cries the Dane, Lord Cochrane standin' ostentatious an' leanin' lazylike over the rail so they could easy see his uniform.

“‘What do you want a doctor for?’

“‘We're a Danish brig from Algiers, an' we've got smallpox aboard.’

“‘H'ist away,’ says Lord Cochrane to me an' Higgs at that, an' the next minute the Danish flag was broke out at the gaff, an' the yeller flag went up on the main.

“‘Smallpox!’ yelled the Spanish officer. ‘Back water, hard,’ he cried, not givin’ anyone time to say no more. ‘Stern all,’ he added. When he’d got further away, he sings out, ‘Git out of here quick. You can’t come in this harbor.’

“‘Where’ll we go to?’ asked the Dane.

“‘I don’t care where you go so long as you don’t come here.’

“‘We’ve got to go somewheres,’ shouted the Dane back at him, Cochrane prompting him all the time. ‘We’ll come into the harbor!’

“But the lieutenant didn’t wait no longer. He rowed back as if the devil was after him, scrambled up the side of his frigate, an’ reported to his cap’n. Then, jest for devilment, Lord Cochrane swung our main yard, got the brig before the wind, an’ headed in to the harbor. That convinced ’em of the truth of what he said. The frigate acted promptly. She fired a shot across our bows, an’ then we put up the helm and swung out of the harbor, Danish flag at gaff an’ yeller flag still flyin’ at main. Then they turned about, claps on all sail, an’ beat back as if she was afraid of ketchin’ it from us. Well, sir, when our cap’n stepped out of the gangway with the Dane, the whole crew bust into a wild roar of laughter. We couldn’t help it.

“‘What the blazes are you laughin’ at?’ yelled his lordship, his face flushin’ until it was almost the color of his hair.

“As usual, I was nearest to him, an’ I had to answer.

“‘We was jest laughin’ at how you fooled them dumb heads of Spaniards, m’lord,’ says I.

“‘Oh,’ says he, ‘I thought mebbe you was laughin’ at me in this uniform.’

“With that he took a long step aft and slit his breeches from clew to earing, they was that tight for him. He turned around quick an’ faced the roarin’ crew. The laughin’ stopped as quick as it had begun.

“‘Umph,’ said his lordship, gravelike, ‘joke’s over.’

“With that he struts in his cabin, and we waits until he is safe there an’ then we busts out laughin’ agin.”

“That certainly was a good trick, Mate,” said Rice, from his position at the wheel.

“Trick!” said Broadrib, meditatively. “Why that man was chock-a-block with tricks. I remembers once a shore party of us was holdin’ a castle a year or two arter, when we’d been promoted to a handy frigate called the *Pallas*. It was at a place called Rojas. The French was assaultin’ it. The fortunes of war had changed an’ we was now friends with the Spaniards and fightin’ with ’em instead of agin ’em. They’d have give up the castle long since, but Lord Cochrane, he said he’d hold it an’ he was doin’ it too. They had give him this frigate after he had captured the *Gamo*, an’ we landed some broadside guns an’ was defendin’ the place in true seamanlike fashion, but the French had bigger guns than we had an’ more of ’em, an’ finally they put a hole in our broadside. The place where they had knocked out the wall was right over the floor which covered the hold, the cellar, I think they called it, an’ his lordship had us chop away the floor. Then we took some long planks and greased ’em an’ we leaned ’em up against the hole that had

been made in our broadside wall, so that they lead from the breach to the cellar, which was a stout place dug out of rock, an' there wasn't no way out of it 'cept a ladder, which we barricaded an' covered with a bulkhead of heavy timber. We'd have plugged up the hole they had made in our broadside only we wasn't any of us stone masons. At any rate, one night the French came chargin' up in spite of all we could do, an' clumb through that hole, yellin' like mad, only to strike them planks which led down almost like the shrouds of a ship's masts. They had been well slushed, too, an' they was as slippery as ice. I never will forget it. We let 'em come. We didn't even fire on 'em. His lordship said it would be a pity to kill 'em. We'd git 'em anyway. They jest slid down them planks as soon as they boarded us, an' afore they knowed it there was about fifty of 'em below in the cellar, an' there they stayed! They couldn't git out neither."

"Well, what happened then?" asked Rey, amid a general burst of laughter.

"They brought up more troops an' knocked more holes in the tower with their guns, an' his lordship decided we had better git back to our ship, so we all filed out, chargin' the French that was between us an' the beach in a seamanlike manner, an' cleared 'em away. Then we made for the boats which the ship had sent off, havin' been signaled to afore. I remembers I was one of the fust to reach the boats an' Lord Cochrane was at the other end of the colyum, which was most proper, him bein' the cap'n, an' me nothin' but a bo's'n's mate. He had a little midshipman with him,

named Marryatt.¹ We was runnin' like mad. We was so tired of bein' cooped up in a stone house that we was glad to be in the air agin, an' layin' a course for our ship. But m'lord was walkin' calm an' stately. He was too proud to run, an' the marines that had been sent off from the ship was draw'd up on the shore blazin' away at the Frenchies who was crowdin' arter our men, but not comin' too close. They was all firin' like mad, too. Mr. Marryatt, who was a great favorite with everybody on board, told the warrant officers in the steerage that night what happened, an', of course, it leaked out all over the ship. It seems that he was Cap'n Cochrane's pusonal aide an', in course, he had to stay by him. But as the firin' got so hot, he finally touches his cap an' he says:

"'Please, sir, I'm only a midshipman. While a cap'n, of course, can't run, a boy kin, an' if you don't mind, sir, an' have nothin' special for me to do, I'll cut away an' join the men at the boats.'

"'Ah,' says the cap'n, smilin' down at the lad, 'are you there, Mr. Marryatt?'

"'Yes, sir, which I don't want to be,' answers the boy.

"'Mr. Marryatt,' says the cap'n, cool enough in spite of the bullets skinnin' about 'em, 'I am, as you say, the cap'n of the ship. My life is of great importance to the ship an' the crew. If I was killed it would be difficult to replace me at present. You, sir, on the contrary, are only a midshipman an' are of no importance whatsoever. If you was shot, I could replace

¹ Afterwards the famous Captain Marryatt, author of many interesting stories of the sea.

you with a hundred others. Therefore, you will not only not run to the boats with the rest, but you will take your position directly behind me to protect me from any chance shot an' you may feel greatly honored by the responsibility thus thrust upon you.'"

The listening men burst into a perfect roar of laughter at this.

"And what did he do?" asked Captain Clough when he could get his breath.

"What could he do, sir? He got behind the cap'n, accordin' to order, an' they marched down the beach as solemn as if they was attendin' the drorin' room of the king. Indeed, it seemed to us who was awatchin' of 'em that we never seed his lordship walkin' so slow. He was jest givin' Mr. Marryatt a lesson, you see. Mr. Marryatt was a little feller an' didn't come much higher than his lordship's belt, so that he weren't of much use as a protection noway. It seemed to us 'bout an hour afore them two got to the boats, an' I never seed a reefer so relieved as that one was as he tumbled into the first one. The bullets was spinnin' around all of us, but Lord Cochrane was just bustin' with laughter as we rowed off to the ship. Every once and a while he would address that little youngster as 'My protector,' which made him turn as red as a beet."

"You said you captured the *Gamo*, that Spanish frigate," asked Clough.

"Yes, sir, we did."

"Tell us about that."

"Gladly, sir," answered Broadrib, "but it is a long yarn, sir, an' perhaps——"

"Well, perhaps we had better have it some other night," said the young captain.

He hauled out his watch again, rose up, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, stretched himself.

"It will soon be eight bells," he said. "Time to set the watch. Er, Rey," he began with elaborate carelessness as the group broke up, "don't you want to stand part of my watch with me?"

"Not tonight, sir," answered the girl promptly, with so impudent an air that Clough wanted to shake her. "I'm quite tired and as you've not put me in either watch I think I'll turn in early."

Her manner was intensely provoking. She would never have dared to answer so if the others had been within earshot, of course.

"But if I order you to stand the watch with me?" said the captain, savagely.

"Oh, of course, if you order me—if you want to punish me——"

"Punish you! Damn it, go below, sir, Miss, I mean," roared Clough.

"Aye, aye, sir. According to order," replied the other, going aft whistling. She whistled very well for a girl, too. Eight bells striking, Clough seized the wheel in exasperation, vowing that he had never met so disagreeable a person in his life.

CHAPTER XI

THE HARPOONER HELPS OUT

BUT if Audrey did not seem disposed to share the captain's watch he was not left to stand it alone because of that. For old Broadrib presently came from the cabin, pipe in hand. The veteran harpooner lounged forward until he came abreast the wheel.

"A fine night, Cap'n Clough," he observed, after a meditative glance up to windward, and a long luxurious draw at his pipe.

"Aye, so it is. The breeze holds well. We're making better way of it," answered Clough.

"At this rate 'twon't be long afore we makes a land-fall or raises the lights of Valparaiso," assented the sailor. He stepped across the deck, leaned over the weather rail and cast a glance alongside. "All of six knots, I'd say, sir," he added.

"That or better. She steers less easily, too," answered the other, giving the *Sharon* an extra spoke or two of weather helm. "If we could only set more sail it would shove her along at a better rate. I confess I'll feel easier when the anchor's down."

"An' me too, sir. But we're better off with no more spread of canvas, I takes it. What's already drorin' would be a heavy job for four men an' a boy to handle should it come in to blow agin."

"Yes, you're right, of course. But why don't you turn in?"

"Ain't sleepy, sir. I'll go to my bunk presently," he replied, staring up to windward.

"Suit yourself, Broadrib."

"Thankee, sir. Meanwhile, I'll go for'ard an' have a bit of a gam with Rice, sir."

The old man rolled forward along the waist in true seaman's fashion and presently brought up on the top-gallant forecastle. The sound of his voice was lost in the sing of the wind through the top-hamper, and the swash of the waves ahead and alongside, as the good ship butted into them.

Captain Clough resumed his interrupted reverie only to have it broken once more, but not until perhaps half an hour had passed.

Audrey had repented herself of her capriciousness. Having every night in, standing no watch, she did not require every available moment of the night for her rest and sleep. In pity for her lover and to delight herself, perhaps to justify her insubordination of the past few days by emphasizing the fact that she was girl and not boy, she had once more donned her only dress, and suddenly appeared beside him.

Now, the young officer was so delighted to see her, and in that guise, that, for the moment, he quite forgot that Broadrib was, as it were, loose upon the deck and might appear at any moment. Ready enough with speech on occasion, Captain Clough could only stare at her for the moment.

"Oh dear," she began, in mock dismay, "you are

the quietest man with a woman! I thought you'd be so glad to see me you'd ——"

"I am. I will," interrupted the man eagerly, finding voice at last.

"That's better. I was so sorry for you. You looked so sad when I disobeyed you that I—do you like me again in this dress?" she explained and questioned in a breath.

"Of course."

"As much as before?"

"More."

"And am I forgiven?"

"You will be if you——" The young captain paused. He was going to do a bolder thing, at least so it appeared to him, than he had ever done before, not even when he had boarded the *Sharon*. He hesitated, however, and as usual it was the woman who could not stand the pause.

"Yes, if?" she quoted.

"If you will—kiss me, as you did the other night," he forced himself to reply, at the same time stretching out his free arm to catch her.

She easily evaded him and she was sailor enough to know that in such a breeze as then prevailed he did not dare let go the wheel. So she did not move very far away, and he was quick to notice that she did not seem displeased—rather the reverse.

Now these were pre-Victorian times and, according to the fictional chronicles of the period, the lovely and artless female—for so they would have described her—would never have suffered such bold and ardent

wooning without fainting away! Indeed, by such standards she ought to have died rather than to have put herself in such a position—a woman, young, unmarried, unchaperoned, alone on a ship filled with men! Horrors! Shades of Fanny Burney and Fenimore Cooper! It was unthinkable! Yet there she was.

Truth to tell, Audrey liked the situation. She enjoyed the horror. She thrilled to the opportunity presented to her. She reveled in the occurrence. She had no mind for flight. She blushed, doubtless, but the night hid the betraying color in her cheeks and her blushes did not matter. So many things are permissible in the half light that cannot be managed in the broad day, fortunately.

The new moon was already a-sky, light from it, faint yet greater than that cast by the stars, illumined softly and mysteriously her graceful, charming figure. If she stood with her slippered feet somewhat wide apart and her arms akimbo, balancing to the roll of the ship like a true sailor, the young captain saw naught amiss in that. It was a proper position to assume upon an uneasy ship, for man or woman.

"Why should I kiss you—again?" she breathed softly.

"Because I—I—" he faltered.

"Well?" she helped him on.

"Because I love you, Miss—Rey—Audrey," he said at last.

"That's a reason for you to kiss me, perhaps, but not for me to—" was her counter.

"Because you love me, then," he interposed with

growing assurance, now quite carried away by his own courage.

He had made the plunge and, so far as he could see, with good hope for himself. Indeed, Audrey had moved a little nearer to him at the thrilling declaration of a moment ago. It was the first time anybody had ever said such things to her.

She was not quite ready to surrender, however. Temporizing was such a delicious pastime it seemed; anticipation appeared to hold joys of its own of which she had not dreamed. What realization might be not even that dainty and hasty caress she had volunteered to bestow upon him before could tell her.

"But do I love you?" she asked, meditatively, as if discussing an entirely impersonal question.

"Don't you? O Audrey!" he began in a sudden and very real alarm.

And then it happened. An unexpected roll of the ship or an involuntary movement of the girl toward the man, or her seizure by his outreached arm, or all three, which was more probable, and she found herself in his arms, or arm, rather, since he did not even then let go the wheel.

One arm was sufficient, however, since she resisted not. For he drew her to him. The beat of heart met the beat of heart. The moonlight fell faintly upon her face, slightly upturned—she had pity upon him, being but one-armed for the moment he had to depend upon her—and then he kissed her.

Quite a different thing, this caress, from that hasty touch of lips upon the memory of which they both had

lived until that more halcyon hour. And unrestricted and unrestrained, for Audrey saw no reason for withdrawal or denial, he kissed her again and again, eyes, lips, and finally her bended head. He whispered words, incoherent, broken, meaningless to anyone but she in that hallowed ocean night, when love came in all its splendor and passion to them both in the South Pacific Seas.

Pity that such things last so short a time, that such moments of rapture should be so fleeting, that when heart would fain speak to heart uninterruptedly some discordant voice must dispel the joy.

"My God! Cap'n Clough, sir," burst out the deep, gruff tones of a thoroughly shocked and greatly scandalized old seaman. "Wot in 'ell's the meanin' of this? An' who in the name of God is this bloody feemale?"

Broadrib, without the slightest intention of surprising his young commander, and certainly with no expectation of seeing the picture now presented to him, having finished his pipe and chat with Rice had rolled aft with the quiet catlike tread of the true old salt, to exchange a word or two with his captain in passing and then to turn in for the balance of the watch.

At the first word of the harpooner Audrey gave forth a little scream and strove to run. But Clough held her close.

"Come here, Broadrib," he said, and not until the bewildered and astonished sailor was close at hand did the captain release the girl.

"Take a near look at the lady, Broadrib," he began

as the other stopped and stared. "Don't you recognize her?"

"May I be keel hauled if 'tain't the lad! Youngster, what in 'ell do you mean by this maskeradin' like a gal? An' you a boy, kissin' the cap'n!" bursts out the thoroughly aroused old seaman.

"But I'm not a boy, Mr. Broadrib," protested Audrey, swiftly.

"Ain't you young Rey McRae, Cap'n Norris' nevvv?"

"Yes and no, I——"

"Am I awake or dreamin'? How can you be both one an' t'other?"

"I'll explain," said Captain Clough. "This is Miss Audrey McRae, whom you know as Rey, the ship's boy, only she's a woman."

"An' allus has been?" asked the veteran, stubbornly.

"Always," answered Audrey herself, smiling up at Broadrib. "It's this way. I'm really Captain Norris' niece. He shipped me as a boy because a girl on ship-board, you know——"

"Aye, that I do, a whaler full of rough men ain't no proper place for a young and lovely feemale woman like you if so be you ain't playin' no tricks on an old man."

"I'm not. Captain Norris knew that as well as you. The only way he could take me with him was as a boy."

"I see. How long have you knowed this Cap'n Clough?"

"Only since the night of the mutiny."

"Didn't I make a pretty good boy?" asked Audrey.

"None better, Missy," was the hearty answer of the harpooner, "an' yet you makes a better girl, I do believe. Sink me if I don't."

"I agree with you, Broadrib, and I don't mind telling you that Miss McRae is going to be my wife as soon as we fall in with a chaplain or a minister to splice us," said Clough, decidedly.

"Pretty quick work, ain't it, sir?" asked the old man, amazed at this further turn of the affair.

"I never said so," cried out the girl.

"But ain't it true, Rey, Miss, I mean? Oh good Lord!"

"Call me Rey, just as you did before, Mr. Broadrib."

"It can't be done, Miss."

"You haven't answered his question, Audrey," urged the captain.

"'Tain't none of my business, Miss, in course," began the sailor after a pause, which for the nonce Audrey did not seem inclined to break, "but if you ain't you'd ought to be arter wot I seen a moment since."

"I am. We are," said Audrey, promptly, whereupon the captain, undeterred by the presence of the sailor, kissed her again.

"That's as it should be," observed Broadrib. "I makes no doubt your uncle would have approved, too, for a finer young man, an' a primer officer, I ain't never sailed under, not even Lord Cochrane hisself. An' I can't say no more than that, Miss an' Sir."

And as this sounded like a benediction, the old man

rolled aft, leaving the lovers to a watch full of happiness together.

"That there boy a feemale!" he muttered. "Now there'll be the devil to pay aboard ship afore we makes a landfall," he added under his breath as he entered the cabin, without in the least meaning to reflect unpleasantly on anybody and not realizing that he spoke as a prophet.

In the morning Rice and Storey were told the great secret. Their astonishment was ludicrous. They could not credit the tale until Audrey put on the dress she had worn and appeared among them as a woman indeed. Then they saw and believed.

Thenceforward Audrey discarded her boy's uniform and habitually wore her proper clothes. She started making some others to replenish her wardrobe, not having lost her skill with the needle by her long masquerade. Rice and Storey were good men and true. They easily accommodated themselves to the new demands of the situation, and they treated the young woman with all the respect due to her station and to the fact that she was their admired young captain's promised wife.

CHAPTER XII

THE WRECK OF THE SAN MARTIN

BROADRIB'S promised yarn of the capture of the *Gamo* was not told the next night. For that day a change had come over the condition of the *Sharon* and her little crew, and one not altogether for the better. About one bell in the first dog watch, which would be half after four o'clock in the afternoon, Rice, aloft on the improvised fore topsail yard for a final survey of the ocean before night fell, was astonished when into the field of vision of the ship's glass he carried swept the hull of a vessel.

"Sail ho!" he shouted at the top of his lungs.

All hands were on deck busied with various tasks, except Storey, whose turn it was to do the cooking, and even he came running from the galley as he heard the cry.

"Where away?" called out Clough in reply.

"Dead ahead, sir."

Old Broadrib, on the forecastle, shaded his eyes and stared over the bows, but could see nothing.

"Can you make it out?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir. It's a dismasted ship," answered Rice.

"At least she's got the stump of a mast standing aft with some kind of a flag flying from it."

"You say she's dead ahead?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well," cried Clough. "You can lay down from aloft."

In his excitement and hurry, Rice came sliding down one of the back-stays, disdaining the standing rigging, but he could add nothing to his previous account.

"Could you see it with the naked eye?"

"Just barely make it out, sir, after I had located it through the glass."

"Broadrib."

"Sir?"

"Keep a sharp lookout for'ard and report as soon as you catch sight of the wreck."

"Aye, aye, sir."

There was nothing to be done, of course, but keep on. There was little they could have done anyway, but nothing was needed since the wreck was dead ahead of them. The ship was carrying all the sail they could possibly set upon her. She moved along fairly rapidly, considering the diminished canvas spread, before the brisk northeast trade, through the rather heavy sea running, and in half an hour old Broadrib hailed from the fore-castle.

"I can make her out now, sir," he said.

Rice took the helm. Captain Clough seized the glass and, followed by Audrey, ran along the gangway to the fore-castle, climbed up on the knightheads and focussed the telescope on the vessel, which he could just see dimly in the growing dusk. She was, he at once discovered, the wreck of a large brig. She had been battered up severely in some storm. A splintered fore-

mast rose a few feet above the deck. Her head booms were gone, her rails, and bulwarks smashed, her boat davits were empty, but the stump of her main mast, which had carried away just below the top, was still standing, and from it a flag fluttered. She was still too far off for him easily to make out the flag, but after staring hard at it for a while through the glass Clough decided it was the red, white, and blue flag of the new Republic of Chile with its single star. There was neither time nor necessity for much speculation, for at the rate the ship was moving toward the wreck, which lay rolling helplessly in the trough of the seas, they would soon be alongside. Captain Clough consulted with the harpooner.

"It'll be almost more than we can do to back our main yard and heave the ship to," he said gloomily to the big seaman.

"We can't never do it at all unless we takes that jury main tops'l off of her. Mebbe we won't have to. Mebbe there ain't nobody aboard the wreck," replied the other.

"Take a look yourself," said Captain Clough, handing him the glass.

The old man focussed it rapidly and viewed the wreck long and carefully. He shut the glass to with a snap and handed it back.

"We've got to git that yard around somehow, sir," he said decidedly. "There must be a score or more of human bein's on her decks. An' by her looks she won't last long."

"Aye, we must," said Captain Clough. "Rey," he

added abruptly, quite forgetting when any emergency arose that she was no longer a boy.

"Yes, sir?" was the ready answer.

"Go aft and take the wheel. Keep her just as she is until I sing out, then ease her helm down. Tell Rice and Storey to come for'ard. We'll settle away the halliards and clew up our main tops'l, pass a furling line around it and let her hang. I guess she'll stand that, Broadrib?"

"I think she will, sir."

"Then all hands will get hold of the main brace and when the time comes we'll heave her to."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Rey as Clough turned to her again, lifting her skirts, which, truth to tell, she often found embarrassing after the greater freedom of trousers, to which she had become accustomed, and running aft to deliver the message and take the wheel.

Rice and Storey sprang aloft while Broadrib slacked off the improvised tops'l halliards. Then he and the captain clewed the sail up and the yard down. Next they clapped a big watch-tackle on the weather-main brace and when the two seamen reached the deck again the main sheet and lee braces were slacked off, the yard swung and the tack boarded.

Of necessity they had to work slowly because they were so short-handed, but by the time they were well abreast of the brig the *Sharon* was fairly hove to and her progress stopped. They could see the wreck plainly now. Her decks, which were almost awash, were crowded with excited men, who stretched out appealing

hands to the *Sharon* and called piteously in Spanish for help. There must have been fifty of them. Captain Clough did not view the prospect altogether cheerfully. Fifty Chileans on the decks of the *Sharon* would crowd her fearfully, especially as every available space below was filled with oil casks. Nor did he entirely trust the South Americans. Still, the men on the brig were in a desperate condition. Their vessel itself was a complete wreck. She sat low in the water and from the sluggishness of her lift to the seas she was already half full and probably leaking like a sieve. Humanity demanded that he receive them aboard the whaler.

Having got the ship hove to, Clough leaped up on the lee rail and hailed.

"Brig ahoy!" he shouted.

Instantly from the brig there arose such a confused clatter, such a medley of shouts and cries, as to be utterly unintelligible. The American looked around at his own little band of tried and true followers in deep disgust at the scene on the other vessel.

"Did you ever hear anything like that?" he exclaimed. Then he hollowed his hands trumpetwise and shouted: "Does anybody aboard you speak English?"

One man, an officer evidently by his dress, detached himself from the crowd on the deck of the brig, approached the broken rail, leaped up on it, steadied there by others who stood around him, and answered.

"I spik a leetle," he shouted, stilling the tumult on the deck of the brig with his hand.

"What brig is that?"

"It is a *buque de guerra* — a ship of war — Señor,

de la Republica de Chile. We are *naufragio*, what you call him, wreck? We have nothing to eat. No water, *nada, nada, nada!*" he went on in his broken Spanish-English, "*Comprende, Señor?* Nothing."

"Very good," answered Clough, meaning that he understood. "I'll take you aboard. Have you a boat left?"

"Not one," shouted the man. "All lost. *Por el amor de Dios, Señor, ayudenos*—help us."

Captain Clough nodded. Every boat on the *Sharon* had been lost at sea or smashed by the gale except a small dingey that hung astern.

"Broadrib," he said, "you and Rice take the dingey and bring the captain of that brig and that English speaking person off her."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Broadrib, touching his cap and running aft, followed by the two men.

"Rey, you and I will keep ship." Captain Clough then turned toward the brig again and cried out, "We've lost all our boats but one. We're sending it off to bring the captain of the brig and anybody who can speak English aboard. You understand?"

"*Si, si, Señor,*" shouted the Spaniard.

He turned and evidently translated Clough's conversation, for a perfect tempest of yells and cries, not apparently intended to express gratitude, broke from the panic-stricken men on the wrecked brig. Indeed, their plight was a desperate one. The Americans doubted if the brig would float four hours. The Chileans had not a boat and apparently no means of making rafts. Unless the *Sharon* had arrived when she did

their certain fate would have been a watery grave when the brig foundered.

Now, Rey, by the young captain's explicit order, had remained at the wheel, fortunately. The high bulwarks along the quarter deck of the whaler completely hid her from the observation of the men aboard the wreck, especially as the latter had lost all her top-hamper and lay so low in the water. Clough now turned to her.

"Audrey," he said, emphatically, "go to your cabin and put on your boy's rig. Men, you understand, no mention of Miss McRae's sex to anyone. Treat her just like the boy you thought her. I would not trust those fellows with a woman further than I could see them."

"I understand," said Audrey, a little uneasily, for this was the first time she had felt any apprehension on the score of sex.

Broadrib answered for the rest as she ran aft:

"We knows, sir. They shan't larn the truth from us an' they shan't no harm come to the little lady while we're alive, neither."

The captain, highly approving these sentiments, now summoned Storey from the galley to take the wheel, whereupon Audrey at once ran to her cabin and shifted nervously into her former jaunty rig. It was too bad, she thought, just as she had begun to get used to being a girl she had to turn herself back into a boy again.

Working smartly meanwhile, Broadrib and Rice lowered the dingey, manned the oars and rowed toward the other ship.

"Mr. Broadrib," shouted the captain as the dingey

rounded the stern of the *Sharon* and came into view between the two vessels.

"Sir?"

"Don't go too near that brig. From the looks of those fellows they would all try to get in the boat at once and swamp you. Just lay off a convenient distance. You understand?"

"Yes, sir. Give way, Rice."

Again Captain Clough hailed the brig.

"I have told my boat not to board you. Get your men back from the rail, leaving only the captain and the man who can speak English. They can come aboard here and then we'll consult as to what's best to be done. Understand?"

"Si," answered the man again.

He turned and spoke to the crew. His words were received with a passionate outburst of protest, but one man, who seemed to be in command, suddenly stepped to the rail and addressed the men, who sullenly gave back.

By this time the dingey was close to the brig. Broadrib turned her about till she presented her stern to the wreck. The captain seized one of the ropes dangling from the fife rail and rapidly let himself down into the boat, where he was at once followed by the man who had spoken English.

"Get clear of her quick, Broadrib," shouted Clough, seeing the men on deck making a rush toward the rail.

The harpooner was on the alert and just as soon as he got the two men aboard the dingey he shoved his boat clear and with Rice pulled manfully away. A howl

of fear and rage arose from the decks of the brig. Poor sailors at best, having little confidence in their officers and being of the excitable Latin temperament, they fancied they were to be abandoned. As no one left aboard could speak English apparently, there was no use in hailing them, so Clough stepped to the gangway to receive his new visitors. The first man who came up was evidently, from his uniform, the captain of the brig. The next man was evidently an under officer, or lieutenant. The captain of the brig, who spoke no English, saluted and then placed his hand upon his heart and bowed profoundly. The next man burst forth in a torrent of speech, half English, half Spanish.

"Easy, easy," interrupted the American. "Tell me a straight story. What's the name of your brig?"

"*El 'San Martin,' de la armade, Chilena, Señor*, of the navee of Chile. You spik Spanish?"

"Mighty little. We'll have to get along in English."

"I can make shift to translate a Spanish word now and then, sir," said old Broadrib, joining them, ready for further orders.

"Very well, we'll manage between us."

"There was ver' bad storm, now four days," continued the man slowly. "The excellent Capitan Gutierrez"—here the captain bowed again profoundly—"do ver' much to save *el bergantin*, *pero*—but it is *ñaufragado*, wrecked—it makes water by the bottom ver' quick and can float leetle more. The half of our men were lost in the sea. We have nothing to eat or drink. For the love of God, Señor——"

"That's all right," said Clough. "We'll take you

aboard, although we went through the same sort of a storm and got pretty well knocked up, as you see. Now the question is how to get you aboard. All my crew have been lost except those you see and all my boats are gone. You can take the dingey and bring your men off. You had better be quick about it, too, because it doesn't look as if the brig would float very long."

The lieutenant translated rapidly to the captain. He seemed to be something of a seaman and he nodded in quick comprehension. He spoke to the lieutenant and said that he himself would take charge of the boat if the American captain would lend him two men for the first trip. Thereafter he would have the boat rowed by his own crew. Of course, Mr. Clough acceded to this request.

"Broadrib, you and Rice take the boat back. Rey, you stand by the helm again. Remember what I said," he added as the girl in her jaunty boy's rig came on deck again. "Storey, you'd better get ready to feed those people. There must be fifty of them at least. Give them some hot soup and hardtack the first thing. It's lucky we filled the scuttle-butt this morning. I'll put a guard over that so they won't drink themselves to death when they come. Meanwhile, take this lieutenant for'ard and give him something to eat and drink. He'll help us to handle the rest."

It was with great difficulty that their captain could restrain the frightened men on the brig. They would have piled overboard in swarms at once and have swamped the dingey, so great was their terror, but he showed himself a good manager and a good com-

mander, and having filled the dingey to her capacity she was rowed back to the ship; the men boarded her, something to eat and drink was passed down to the captain, and Broadrib and Rice, volunteering for some other trips, many others were successively brought aboard.

They were exhausted with fear, loss of sleep, exposure, hunger, and thirst. Captain Clough had got Captain Norris' pistols and given one to Storey and kept one himself, bestowing a small one of his own on Audrey. Storey kept them out of the galley and he kept them away from the scuttle-butt, for if the shipwrecked, maddened crew had gorged themselves with food and drink there would have been terrible consequences. As it was, each man finally received a panikin of water, a bowl of soup, and a supply of hard bread, and then was told by the lieutenant, who was of great assistance, to lie down on the deck and rest.

By this time night had fallen, but there was a long twilight and the work of transshipping the crew of the brig proceeded rapidly. After a time, seeing that the men of the brig were too weak to do any effective rowing and that his own men were tired out, Captain Clough called Broadrib and Rice aboard, bidding the harpooner watch out for Rey, and with the English-speaking lieutenant taking the place of the Chilean captain at the tiller of the dingey, Captain Clough and Storey did the rowing for the remainder of the transshipment.

Just before it became completely dark every man had been taken off the wreck and fed. As Captain

Clough was about to invite the Chilean captain and the other officers, of whom three had survived, including the English-speaking one, into the cabin for a consultation, a cry from Rey, who had bravely kept the wheel the whole time, attracted the attention of everyone on the ship. The crew of the brig had been rescued just in time, for as they scrambled to leeward for a last look at her, they saw her dip her nose in the water, her stern rose in the air and she went down slowly, her flag still fluttering from the stump of the main mast.

"You save us at the last minute, Señor," said the lieutenant, whose name was Miguel de la Paz.

"I am glad we were so fortunate as to do so," answered Captain Clough. "Now, if you gentlemen will step below to the cabin we'll talk over what's to be done. Mr. Broadrib."

"Sir?"

He handed him the pistol he had carried.

"You'll take the deck until I return. Señor de la Paz, will you tell Captain Gutierrez to make his men stay for'ard while we talk, and bid one of your lieutenants stay with them?"

Captain Gutierrez nodded as the words were interpreted. He spoke a few sharp words to the crew and a few quieter ones to a young officer, who saluted, and then the remaining officers of the brig, with Captain Clough, approached the companionway leading down to the cabin.

"Storey, you relieve Rey at the wheel. Rey, come with me. I may need you," said Clough, as he started below.

He did not intend to let Audrey out of his sight if he could help it while he had all these uncertain quantities aboard.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW THE ADMIRAL GOT ELECTED

LANDLUBBERS say a short horse is soon curried; sailors, a small sail is soon furled. The conference in the cabin was brief. Captain Gutierrez was greatly delighted when he learned that the *Sharon* was bound for Valparaiso. Through Lieutenant de la Paz he courteously expressed himself as most grateful to his rescuers and declared himself ready to do anything to facilitate the working of the ship.

Captain Clough arranged to take Broadrib into his own cabin, which was provided with a spare bunk, Rice and Storey doubled up, Rey was left undisturbed in her own room next to the captain's—much to the subsequent surprise of the Chilean, who saw no reason why a boy should enjoy such a privilege—which left three berths available for Captain Gutierrez and the three lieutenants. The other commissioned officers of the brig had been lost in the wreck. It was arranged that Captain Gutierrez and Lieutenant de la Paz should share Captain Clough's watch and that the two other lieutenants, whose names were Lopez and Calderon, should be apportioned to that of Mr. Broadrib. Storey and Rice were to stay aft with the Americans, one in each watch.

The working of the ship and the cooking of the meals

were to be done by the Spanish crew. Captain Gutierrez in writing expressly waived any claim whatsoever to salvage for assisting in working the *Sharon* to port. Indeed, he said that his government would probably liberally reward the Americans for having rescued him and his.

The warrant officers of the brig and some of her older seamen would be berthed in the forecabin. The rest of the Chileans would have to take their chances on deck, although by doubling up, as one watch was always on and one off at night, quarters below might be managed for many of them.

The five American and the four Chilean officers would live off the cabin stores, the rest of the crew off the ship's stores.

These points having been settled, the officers repaired to the deck. Storey and Rice were summoned in consultation and the whole matter explained to them and Broadrib.

"So I'm sort of a quarter-deck officer, am I?" said Rice.

"We both are," said Storey.

"Yes," said Clough. "I don't altogether trust these foreigners and I think it just as well that we should all stay together aft and that we should all be armed. There are several pistols below which belonged to the mates and I shall give each man a weapon, and Rey one also. We are not to let these Chileans get out of hand for a minute. None of them must come aft here on the quarter deck except to perform some necessary evolution."

"What's goin' to be our position with regard to these yere Chilean officers?" asked old Broadrib.

"They are under our command absolutely," answered Captain Clough. "You will give your orders to them in your watch—I find Lieutenant Calderon also speaks a little English—and they in turn will transmit those orders to the crew. Now let's get to work and divide the men into watches and make ready for the night."

Captain Gutierrez accordingly assembled his men, explained to them the arrangements that had been made and divided them into watches. The main yard was swung, the main topsail was set and the *Sharon* laid on her course again.

The Chileans were so grateful at being rescued, they had gone through so much, that they were extremely willing to do anything. The watch off eagerly sought rest in the forecabin, or where they could, and as there was nothing to be done, those on watch found sheltered spots on the deck and tried to get a little sleep.

"I have the first watch," said Captain Clough. "Broadrib, you and Storey go below and turn in."

The night passed uneventfully. The next day, encouraged by this reinforcement to his crew, which now made such work possible, Captain Clough improvised fore and mizzen topmasts out of the last remaining spare spars and with some boat masts, which were stowed amidships, and two royal yards spliced together, added to the sail spread and in the fine breeze prevailing materially increased the sailing rate of the ship.

The Chileans worked with a will now that their

anxieties were relieved. They seemed to be a cheerful, active set of men, although they were clumsy and unskilful in their seamanship. That did not matter so much with experts like Clough and Broadrib to direct them.

There was not much to do on the ship. There was plenty of provision. Captain Clough allowed it to be served out unstintedly, so the new crew of the whaler was very contented. As only two of the officers could speak English, and as none of the Americans save old Broadrib knew any Spanish, conversation was more or less limited.

That evening, however, in the second dog watch, the five Americans got together aft, smoking, and the four Chilean officers joined them.

"May be we are—what you say?—luckee to be overhauled by *el almirante*," said Lieutenant de la Paz, "before we get near Valparaiso."

"What admiral?" asked Captain Clough, who recognized the Spanish title.

"*Almirante Cochrane*, the noble Dundonald."

"Do you know him, Señor?" broke in Broadrib.

The Spaniard threw up his hands.

"All South America know him. Why you ask?"

"I sailed with him in England."

"Ees it possible?"

"Yes, I was his fav'rite warrant officer," said old Broadrib. "I think there was nothin' he'd do for any sailor he wouldn't a done for me."

"He is marvelous," said the Chilean. "He capture the port of Valdivia with nothing at all. *Nada!* I was there. We sail up the river. We took fort after

fort. We land. We all did mos' valiantly, but with *el almirante* always in the lead. We capture sheep after sheep. It was wonderful. And his own frigate, the *O'Higgins*, made so much water that *el almirante* himself had to repair it with his own hands so that it still float. We not know how to build sheeps, only to fight them," said the young man.

"I seen him do things single-handed myself," said old Broadrib. "Why, we was layin' off Basque Roads, in France, you know, blockadin' a big French fleet that was perfected by a boom an' forts an' guard-boats, an' heaven only knows what. Lord Cochrane decided he'd blow up the boom with an explosion vessel, la'nch a lot of fire ships agin' 'em an' burn up some of 'em. Nobody thought he could do it. They all laughed at him when he urged it on 'em."

"And did he?" asked Audrey, who was feeling very comfortable and happy, no one having the least suspicion about her, apparently.

"He sartain did. He was on the *Imperieuse* then, an' a mighty smart frigate she was, too. He took a lot of bullies from the crew, manned a powder vessel, sailed her up to the boom, touched her off, jumped into the boat an' rowed away like mad. We didn't git very far off when she let go. Lord love ye, it was as if the whole earth had blowed up."

"What happened then?" asked the Chilean lieutenant.

"It tore the boom to pieces."

"And then?"

"Well, then he cast off the fire ships an' when the

Frenchies seed 'em comin' in they thought the devil was loose! For, not content with takin' in a powder vessel, his lordship must needs go hisself on the first fire ship, which 'tain't a pleasant thing to be aboard of on a hot night, as I kin testify, for he kep' me with him all the time, although I wasn't wishful to hazard my life like his'n, being a common sailor an' havin' only one——"

"And how many do you think Lord Cochrane has?" asked Clough laughingly.

"He allus acted like he had a dozen," answered the old sailor gravely.

"He act the same with us, too," said Señor de la Paz, who was listening with the most concentrated attention, so as not to lose any of the fascinating yarn.

"That's the way he allus acts," returned the harpooner, pleased at such confirmation. "Well, when them there big French ships-o'-the-line seen them fire ships blazin' like furnaces driftin' down on 'em with the wind an' tide, they cut cables an' run."

"Did any of them catch afire?" asked Rice.

"Not one. Only the fire ships burned themselves to the water's edge an' sunk. But they'd done their part. They scared the Frenchies so bad that when the day broke there was a dozen of 'em ashore."

"What happened then?" asked Storey.

"Why, Lord Cochrane took the *Imperieuse* in an opened fire on 'em."

"Where was the rest of the fleet?"

"Ca'mly standin' on an' off about two leagues to seaward. If they'd come in we'd have ended that there French fleet right then an' there, but there was bad

blood between Cap'n Cochrane an' the admiral in command, which his name was Gambier. He was by way of bein' a lord, too, an' a mighty strange kind of a man for a sea officer. He was always distributin' tracks to the seamen."

"Tracks?" asked Storey.

"Yes, little papers full of Bible stories an' good advice, you know."

"You mean 'tracts,'" said Captain Clough.

"That's what I said, ain't it?"

"Of course, heave ahead."

"Well, his lordship never did git along with nobody who was over him, but as I've said, them as was under him allus loved him. For that admiral stayed out in the offin', refusin' to send in a single capital ship. But that didn't make no difference to our red-headed fire eater. He actually went in alone an' engaged them French ships-o'-the-line. To be sure, they was took at a disadvantage, them bein' stranded on shoals or actually ashore an' not bein' able to use their batteries well. It was too much for English blood to stand an' finally some of the other frigates got permission of the admiral to come in an' they lent some help. We did destroy two or three great Frenchmen with their help an' we druv the rest futher into the harbor. They was no use thereafter in that war. But we could have got 'em all if it hadn't been for the admiral. Lord Cochrane, he was that mad that him an' the admiral got mixed up in a parliamentary row, charges was made an' the admiral was tried. Finally the party in power to which the admiral belonged felt that they had to stand

by him an' they dismissed Lord Cochrane from the British Navy. Oh, he had an awful time. He was in prison an'——"

"Yes, I heard something about it," said Clough.

"He was the funniest man ever an' most free an' easy with his jaw-tackle," said Broadrib, laughing. "Why I once heerd him tell about the time he fust stood for parliament. It was a placed called Honiton. His lordship didn't do much campaignin', though he's a great speech maker, too. There ain't many men that can heave a finer line of talk aboard an enemy than he kin, an' 'tain't all sailors' lingo neither. Why, sirs, when he gits up to speechify in parliament the whole country wants to hear him. Well, he didn't do much talkin' 'bout this election, but arter it was over an' they found he'd only got ten votes, he sent for the ten men that had voted for him an' he give 'em the finest dinner he could buy. There was a scuttle-butt of champagne, I heerd, so's everybody could drink his fill. An' then he gives each man ten guineas, too, 'cause he said the other side was givin' bribes an' as these men had enough courage not to accept bribes an' voted for him without money an' without price—them was his very words—he thought they should be rewarded."

"That was a funny thing to do," said Clough.

"Wait till you hears the rest of it," said old Broadrib.

"I not know *el almirante* was such a *politico*," said Lieutenant de la Paz. "Will you wait a minute? I will tell my captain this incident in his life."

"Heave ahead," said Broadrib, puffing away at his pipe. "The rest of the story'll keep."

Rapidly Lieutenant de la Paz explained to Captain Gutierrez the trend of the conversation. The Chilean was more of a politician than a sailor and he listened with deep interest. When the lieutenant had stopped, he made an observation of his own.

"What's he saying?" asked Clough.

"He say he think it is a strange thing for a man to pay people after he is defeated. He think it better if he had spent his money before."

"That's the way it's gener'ly done," said Rice.

"Jest you wait, gents," said old Broadrib, knowingly. "Well, sirs, it happened that about a year after parliament was dissolved an' there was a new election, Lord Cochrane stood agin for Honiton an' this time all hands voted for him. He was elected unanimous."

"Well, then what happened?" asked Clough.

"Nothin, nothin' at all. After he was elected they all come around and asked him for ten guineas a man an' another dinner. He turned on 'em most contemptuous, askin' whether they'd voted for him for principle or jest for the money. The whole town was howlin' with rage 'cause they had refused good money offered by t'other side in expectation he would do somethin' handsome, as he'd done afore. But he said it was a question of principle with him. He said he could reward virtue, but nothin' else."

"And didn't they get a thing?" asked Rey, as the whole party burst into laughter, in which even Captain Gutierrez and his officers joined, after being told the incident by Señor de la Paz.

"Yes, they did. His lordship was finally prevailed

upon to give 'em a dinner. He unwisely left the orderin' of the dinner to someone else, an' he was sent a bill for one thousand pounds, which he refused to pay, an' that got him in jail agin."

"You were going to tell us about the capture of the *Gamo*," said Clough, as the merriment died away.

"That will have to be for another night," said old Broadrib solemnly. "Time to set the watches, sir," he added, as one of the hands forward struck the bell eight times, man-of-war custom and routine having been instituted after the reception of the Chileans on board.

There was no more yarn telling on the forecastle for a week or so. Nasty weather set in, rainy, chilly, and with the wind blowing in squalls which made it necessary for them to watch the weak-sparred ship closely. The Americans did not altogether trust the Chileans, and they were of course on deck most of the time. Audrey stuck closely to the captain, who watched over her with a solicitude that might have betrayed the secret if the girl had not so perfectly played her part.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SECOND MUTINY ON THE SHARON

THERE was no denying it. A state of friction had grown up during the fortnight since they had been received on the *Sharon* between the Chileans and the Americans. The feeling of gratitude of the one to the other had more or less disappeared. The good living and comparatively idle life—for there were no guns for drill, no sails to be set, in short nothing at all for so many men to do on the whaler, and Clough had directed the ship's stores to be served out most generously to his unwelcome guests—had put the Chileans in fine condition for any venture.

Captain Gutierrez did not enjoy that position of subordination to a young man half his age, as was Captain Clough, to which ill fortune had assigned him. Although the Americans were unusually circumspect in their conduct, little causes of difference arose with growing frequency, some inevitable irritation developed, and but for Captain Clough's stern determination that there should be no break, serious difficulties might have developed between the two races aboard the whaler.

He was heartily sick of this obnoxious addition to his command, and he wished that he had never seen them or that in some way he could be rid of them.

He determined that if he came across a Chilean war ship—and there were a number of them cruising along the South American coast—he would insist upon the immediate transshipment to her of every foreigner aboard his vessel.

Meanwhile he carefully totaled up the cost of daily food and added it to a bill of expenditures which he intended to render to the Chilean government. The food, by the way, was much better than that served in the Chilean Navy, and the fortunate South Americans enjoyed it hugely.

One morning when the observation Captain Clough had taken the day before indicated he was within a few weeks' sail of Valparaiso, one of the Chilean lookouts who was constantly aloft reported a sail. The Chileans were very indifferent seamen and most negligent lookouts. The sail should have been reported long before it was and, as a consequence, soon after attention was called to it the vessel was visible from the deck.

The Pacific is a vast ocean, and was then largely untraversed, save by foreign whaling ships, which were not apt to be met with in those latitudes at that season of the year. The coastwise trade had been swept out of existence between the cruisers of the rebellious colonists and the war ships of the King of Spain. Indeed, the latter were few and far between and mostly remained snug in the harbors, so enterprising were the Chileans and so well handled their sea forces under Admiral Cochrane.

Consequently, when the reported sail appeared to be a large full-rigged ship, a great amount of curiosity

and interest was at once aroused aboard the *Sharon*. As a neutral vessel belonging to a friendly power which had taken neither side in the war raging between the South Americans and the Spaniards, the *Sharon* had nothing to fear from either side. So Captain Clough steadily held his course.

The whaler, as usual, was running free with a quartering wind, while the stranger was braced sharp up on the port tack. She had been far to leeward, that is, off the starboard bow, when she had been sighted. The two ships, therefore, if they continued their present courses, would probably pass within hailing distance of each other.

As they drew closer together and as the hull of the stranger rose from the water, it was seen that she was a heavy ship of war. The size of her topsails, the breadth of her yards, and the height of her masts confirmed the *Sharon's* people in that conclusion. That she was a large frigate was certain. If the Chileans had been better seamen they might have recognized her; that is, they would have known certainly whether she was one of their own ships or not.

At first sight they concluded that she was. Her colors were flying at the gaff end, but she was too far away to distinguish what they were. Captain Gutierrez and his officers gathered in a little group on the poop deck of the *Sharon*, and borrowing a glass, or telescope, from Captain Clough, they surveyed her long and carefully in turn, talking among themselves in Spanish the while, with great volubility and animation.

The five Americans had made some little progress in

Spanish—that was about all they had to do—and the Spanish officers had picked up a smattering of English. Broadrib was the most proficient of all in Spanish, because of his previous knowledge; next to him came Rey, who was the youngest, and therefore learned the quickest. But neither of these two, nor all the rest of them together, could follow the rapid conversation of the Spaniards.

Captain Clough looked from the approaching ship, now in plain view even to the naked eye, to the group of Spanish officers, who were growing more and more excited. His suspicions were aroused and he wondered what they were planning. Well, he would never give up his ship without a fight for her. The excitement, he observed, was presently communicated to the men of the crew who were swarming along the rail, staring at the ship, and gesticulating and gabbling in a disorderly way, which quite disgusted the cooler and more collected Americans.

Finally Captain Gutierrez and Lieutenant de la Paz turned to the Americans.

“We think,” said Señor de la Paz, “that sheep is Spanish. Look.”

He handed the glass to the American.

“It certainly is the Spanish flag,” said Captain Clough, after a long scrutiny.

“And it is a *buque de guerra*.”

“A man-of-war for certain.”

“*Precisamente!* Now we must fly.”

“Why should we fly?” asked Captain Clough, in great surprise.

"They will come up to us. They will capture us. We will be taken to *Espana*, to the prisons. You know it not. It is terrible."

"I don't see why they should overhaul us. Have your men get away from that rail. Let them stow themselves below in the fore-castle or aft in the cabin, if needs be. Let not one appear upon the decks of the ship but her proper crew of Americans. If she speaks to us, we'll tell them what we are and that will be all," he replied confidently.

"You know not the Spaniard. He will come up to the sheep. He will send his boat aboard. We shall be discover. We shall be made prisoners at once. We are rebel, maybe we hang. We must fly."

"Well, I'd like to know how you expect us to fly, as you say?" asked Clough contemptuously. "We are running free now. That is our best point of sailing with this rig."

"You must put up the helm," insisted the Chilean brokenly, at least that is what Captain Clough understood him to say. "Bring the wind directly aft, put the head of the sheep to the southward, so," he pointed away as if to explain his words; "we shall then pass out of hail."

"And what will he think when he sees us change our course without any reason?" asked Captain Clough stubbornly, with growing anger at the presumption of any man trying to dictate to him on his own quarter deck. "He will certainly be of the opinion that we are trying to avoid him and that will bring him down on us the sooner."

"If we start now," urged De la Paz most vehemently, "maybe we get away. That sheep there—it is covered with canvas, but it sails slow. I think it is the Spanish frigate, *Esmeralda*. Her bottom is very *sucio*—it have many plants of the sea on it. We can make it. The men are ready. Give the order."

"I'm hanged if I do," said Clough indignantly. "This is an American ship pursuing her lawful course on the high seas. The Spanish frigate yonder has nothing to do with us. If her captain boards us, he does it at his peril. I won't shift the helm an inch or permit a brace to be touched." De la Paz opened his mouth for further argument. "That will do," said Captain Clough shortly. "You understand I am in command of this ship, and I hold my course."

"But, Señor——"

"Silence!" shouted the American fiercely, his patience quite exhausted. "And tell your men to get for'ard," he added, waving his hand toward the crew, which had suddenly massed in the gangways around Lopez and Calderon, who had joined them by their captain's orders.

Now it so happened that Broadrib and Rey had gone forward to look at the approaching stranger, leaving Rice and Storey with Captain Clough. As soon as the two men heard his words, they sprang to his side and presented a united front toward the enemy. Things looked very serious. Captain Clough raised his voice.

"Broadrib," he shouted loudly, "lay aft here, you and Rey. Shake a leg."

There was that in the captain's tone that apprised

the experienced old seaman that something was wrong, and he and the girl at once turned to obey. They had not gone a dozen steps, when three of the Chileans sprang on the harpooner from behind and beat him to the deck, while another one struck Rey a cowardly blow on the head. There was a tremendous confused scuffle abreast the foremast in the starboard gangway, for Broadrib was made of tough stuff and had plenty of fight in him yet.

"Unhand those men," cried Captain Clough passionately, his heart in his mouth for the girl, and for the old sailor, too. He whipped out his pistol, cocked, and presented it. "Gangway there! Come on, men!" he shouted, as followed by the other seamen, who also drew their weapons, he rushed at the mass of Chileans, determined to effect a rescue.

The men sullenly opened a way before his advance, not liking the looks of the Americans, especially as they had their weapons out and ready. It would have been better, perhaps, if they had all remained on the quarter deck, for the instant they passed, at a signal from Captain Gutierrez, some of the Chileans, led by two of the lieutenants, leaped upon them from behind. Clough shot one, Rice got another, but Storey's pistol was knocked from his hand, and the next instant a free-for-all fight raged in the starboard gangway.

In spite of the strenuous resistance of Broadrib, he had been at last secured. A spare rope had been passed around him, and he was tightly lashed hand and foot. Audrey lay on the deck with her eyes closed, apparently senseless, having rolled into the scuppers, so that she

had not been trampled upon. At least, she made no movement, and as she was supposed to be only a boy, and not a very vigorous one at that, none of the mutineers paid any attention to her. She was not even bound.

Forty-odd men were too much for the three remaining Americans, even though the forty were Chileans, unaccustomed to rough and tumble fighting, and Captain Clough and the two seamen were soon bound and helpless like the old harpooner. Storey had an ugly gash on his head which bled profusely, but the others were only battered, bruised, and shaken.

The four bound men were roughly flung down on the gratings amidships, where the boom-boats had been stowed and left to their own devices. Rey was brutally dragged to the side of Rice and left there also. Her eyes still remained closed, and she looked as if she had not recovered consciousness. Captain Gutierrez immediately assumed command. The two Chilean sailors, who had been shot dead in the brawl, were unceremoniously dropped overboard without prayer or service. The helm of the whaler was put up, the braces tended, and the ship got before the wind. The course of the *Sharon* was now altered until it paralleled that of the Spanish ship, the direction of sailing of the two ships being now nearly opposite.

At the same time a large American flag was bent on the gaff halliards, and the ensign flapped briskly out in the fresh breeze then blowing.



Broadrib was made of tough stuff and had plenty of fight in him

CHAPTER XV

THE ESMERALDA TAKES A PRIZE

NOW the Spanish frigate had so far pursued the even tenor of her way, apparently without noticing the *Sharon*. Perhaps the whaler might have been permitted to pass without being spoken to, although her condition was certain to attract attention; but the change in her course, the obvious intention on the part of the American to avoid being hailed, and to get out of the way, her evident purpose of running from the Spaniard, aroused the interest of the frigate's officers and people.

Captain Gutierrez, studying the situation through the glass, could see movements of men upon her decks. Something was about to happen. Suddenly a cloud of smoke darted out and arose upward from the port bow of the Spanish ship, followed presently by the dull roar of a gun. What was wanted was quite evident. The Spaniard desired speech with the stranger. Some explanation of her changed course was to be required. Captain Clough and the rest, who saw everything that passed, were filled with a certain savage joy. The advice of the American seaman had been entirely correct. If they had stood on, in all probability any intercourse would have been characterized by a simple exchange of sea courtesy, a polite inquiry on the part of the Span-

iard, whose curiosity would be aroused by the condition of the whaler, as to what was the trouble; an adequate answer from the American, an offer of assistance possibly, a declination, a waving of flags, and that would have been all.

Now, by their stupidity, the Chileans had played directly into the hands of the Spaniards. Captain Gutierrez, visibly excited more than ever by this blank shot, now harangued the crew who had come aboard without any arms. There were a good many whaling implements left on the *Sharon*, however. The men eagerly seized them, under direction of their officers. Those who were not lucky enough to possess themselves of such weapons took marlinspikes and belaying pins. And all were stationed at the rails in readiness for action. They were obviously getting ready to receive boarders with a warm resistance. They did not lack courage apparently. It was madness, of course, but they actually seemed to be contemplating resistance. Otherwise no attention was paid to the signal of the frigate.

The Spaniard, seeing that the *Sharon* still held her course, now fired a shotted gun. He meant business, and did not allow his authority to be flouted. The ball ricocheted along the water in front of the bows of the whaler, which, as before, paid no attention, still running off before the wind.

"The next one'll be into us," growled the disgusted Clough.

"Yes," said old Broadrib. "I suppose afore we gits through, this vessel'll be knocked to pieces with all

her wallyble cargo an' all we've done will count for nothin'."

"I don't know as to that," said Clough. "The Spaniards can see that she is apt to be a rich prize," he went on bitterly. "They will spare us if they can."

"Look, sir," said Rice.

"They are coming about," said Captain Clough, as the helm of the frigate was put down, and she shot up into the wind, her head sails shaking. "We're in for it now," he added, as the Spanish ship finally came to on the other tack.

She had been badly handled, but in the breeze that was blowing, even indifferent seamen could scarcely miss stays. She was now heading once more at right angles to the course of the *Sharon*. Captain Gutierrez now shifted his helm, hauled in the braces, and brought the wind abeam again, but the maneuver was unavailing. The other ship sailed two feet to the *Sharon's* one.

The Spaniard, more easily handled by her full crew, in almost less time than it takes to tell it, was close aboard the *Sharon*. A figure jumped up on the taff-rail of the big frigate, which loomed tremendously above them, and hailed in Spanish. The man spoke slowly, in order that his voice might carry.

"What's he saying?" asked Clough.

"He says heave her to, or he'll smash us with a broadside," answered the old harpooner. "I suppose he wonders what these blame fools will do."

The fools referred to were brave enough. There was no lack of courage in the Chileans, but they were

now so obviously and completely at the mercy of the frigate that there was nothing left them but compliance. One broadside would have sunk the hapless whaler. Captain Gutierrez reluctantly gave the necessary orders. His crew dropped their weapons, and with obvious relish, set about obeying them.

"Don't try to back that main yard," shouted Captain Clough, seeing the men running to the braces, "without taking that tops'l off of her."

As usual, nobody paid any attention to him, and, indeed, he spoke hurriedly and in English, and the sullen men braced aback the main yard as ordered. As the weak jury topmast felt the force of the wind, the make-shift spar carried away with a crash. However, nobody paid much attention to it in the confusion, and the *Sharon* was finally clumsily hove to.

Meanwhile, the Spaniard had lowered a large cutter filled with armed men. As she was rowed over to the *Sharon*, Captain Clough requested Rice, if he could, to ascertain the condition of Audrey, who had been lying perfectly still next the sailor. Wonderful to relate, when Rice spoke, the girl answered.

"I am only shamming," she whispered. "I thought maybe if I pretended to be dead they would let me alone, and you see they have. I'm not lashed. Wait, I'll free you all."

By this time every Chilean on the whaler had crowded to the rail, and was staring down at the cutter, so that nobody was observing the prisoners. When Rice told Clough what Audrey had said, the captain told him to ask her if she still had her knife. Receiving an affirma-

tive answer, Clough directed her to cut the lashings that bound the four Americans. This the girl proceeded to do in rapid succession, since nobody was paying the least attention to them, all eyes being fixed on the approaching Spanish cutter.

Quickly divesting themselves of their lashings once they were cut, Captain Clough and the three men got to their feet. They were weaponless, but they were free. Before they could decide on what to do, a hail came from the Spanish boat.

"What ship is that and where bound? Why did you change your course?"

"This is the American sheep *Sharon*, which go to take the whales," answered Señor de la Paz, speaking broken English, in an attempt to deceive the Spaniards. "We changed the course because—we wanted to," he finished in Spanish, thoughtlessly.

"Well, this is His Most Catholic Majesty's frigate *Esmeralda*. I am ordered to bring your captain aboard the ship," answered the boat officer in Spanish also.

"My captain say he will not come," answered De la Paz in English again.

The suspicions of the Spanish officer had been aroused by the whole proceeding. At this instant a diversion was created. Captain Clough, taking a sudden resolution, ran to the rail, shouldering away from it several of the astonished Chileans.

"I am an American," he said. "This is my ship. She has been seized by Chileans."

He got no further, for the Chilean officers dragged him down, but before they could wreak their vengeance

upon him, the Spanish boat shot alongside the ship at the starboard gangway.

"Board her, men," shouted the Spanish officer, and in a second a swarm of armed Spanish seamen came clambering up the side battens, while some leaped for the main chains.

The gangway was filled with Chileans brandishing weapons, and boarding might have been difficult had not old Broadrib and Rice suddenly attacked the men in the gangway from behind. Into the skirmish Audrey McRae also plunged, belaboring the nearest man with a marlinspike picked up from the deck. Storey, with the best will in the world, was too weak to do anything from the loss of blood he had sustained.

The Chileans, thus unexpectedly attacked in the rear, gave way, and in a moment the Spanish officer, who spoke a little English, inquired of Captain Clough the meaning of the strange situation. The American told him, as well as he could, and willingly consented to accompany the Spanish officer to the frigate.

Leaving a junior lieutenant in command of the *Sharon*, the Spanish officer and Captain Clough, who, as usual, took Audrey with him, were rowed back to the frigate. The interview between the American and the captain of the frigate was most unsatisfactory to the former. This Spanish officer spoke English fluently, and he had no difficulty in making himself understood. Captain Clough rapidly related their sighting of the wreck of the *San Martin*, his rescue of the Chilean crew, the foundering of the brig, the sighting of the *Esmeralda*, his cowardly seizure by the Chileans and

the ruse of the youngest member of his crew, by which he and the men had got free at the opportune moment. Then he formally claimed the ship as his own, offering to give up the Chileans, who had certainly forfeited any right to the protection of the American flag by their conduct, and desired permission to go on his way rejoicing.

"As to that, Señor," said the Spaniard, courteously but firmly, "I cannot grant your request. Without in the least disputing what you say, the circumstances, as they appear to me at present, are like this: I overhaul a ship on the high seas under suspicious circumstances, evidently trying to run away from me. Although she flies the American flag, I find her in possession of a crew of Chilean rebels, headed by a Captain Gutierrez, who is one of the most noted and successful commanders in the rebel navy. The ship is his when we capture her. She, therefore, becomes the lawful prize of the King of Spain."

"But I tell you the ship is mine."

"Doubtless. No one will dispute your original claim, Señor, and doubtless when you make proper representations to the Chilean government, provided it can survive, they will reimburse you for the ship and probably pay, in addition, heavy damages, but under the circumstances, the ship having been in the possession of the Chileans——"

"I demand, in the name of the United States, that you give her up to me."

"It is a demand which I cannot entertain," answered the Spaniard coolly.

Captain Clough stared at him in deep disgust, for he instinctively realized that he would get no satisfaction out of the unstable and struggling government of Chile, if indeed it did succeed in the revolution. It looked to him as if he had lost everything by a chapter of unpreventable accidents.

"I trust, Señor, that you see the inevitableness of my duty which, however distasteful to me—and I assure you my appreciation of your bravery, your skill, and courage but intensifies my regret—I must carry out. I am afraid that you have lost your ship. I can only hope that you can secure some indemnity from the so-called Chilean government."

"Señor," abruptly said Captain Clough, his face dark with rage, "I will lay this matter before the first United States representative or ship of war that I come across. Yonder ship is mine. She is under the American flag now. The mere fact that a lot of mutineers took her from me, men whose lives I had saved, doesn't give you any valid claim to her whatsoever, according to my view, and I repeat my demand that you give her back to me."

"The demand is again refused," answered the Spaniard. "Come, sir, we have parleyed enough. I have taken the ship, and I do not intend to give her up. She is of value?"

"Find out for yourself," blurted out the American. "Will you put me back on the ship?"

"By no means," said the Spaniard. "You are too valuable a man to be left on the prize."

"You don't mean to make a prisoner of me?"

"Certainly not. There is no war between your country and mine. I beg you to accept the hospitality of the *Esmeralda* until we reach Callao."

"And my men?"

"They shall be brought to this ship, where they shall be treated as well as we can manage, Señor."

There was nothing for Captain Clough to do, apparently, but to accept the situation, although it must be admitted he did it with very bad grace.

"You may return," said the captain presently, "and pack up your personal belongings. And have your men do the same. Then you will be brought back to the *Esmeralda*, and I will provide you with suitable quarters in accordance with your rank, and every attention shall be paid you until we land at Callao, whither we are bound. Upon our arrival, I will at once set you ashore. Meanwhile, anything I can do to alleviate this misfortune, I shall be glad to do," he continued, with most gracious urbanity.

Thus it was that Captain Clough and Audrey McRae, and the three men found themselves semi-prisoners on board the Spanish frigate, *Esmeralda*, Captain Baldamero Cueto headed for Callao, far to the northward of Valparaiso, a port to which they had not the faintest desire to repair. Their ship had been taken from them and all their daring and skill had brought them to nothing but this sorry pass.

Captain Clough did have some satisfaction, however. When he went back to the ship to get his belongings, he took occasion to go up to Captain Gutierrez, who was standing moodily staring at the Spanish frigate. The

infuriated American slapped him in the face and then, when the captain's hand went to the sheath from which his sword had been taken, Clough leaped on him. Before the Spaniards could separate the two men, the young American officer had the satisfaction of administering a sound beating to the Chilean.

"You'll answer to me for this," screamed the captain, Lieutenant de la Paz translating, "if we ever get free."

"Tell him that if we ever do get free, and I meet him again, I'll beat him again," said the American. "You are a crowd of traitorous ingrates. I save you and now you lose me my ship by your eternal foolishness."

This terminated the interview. The captain of the frigate put a heavy prize crew on board the *Sharon*. From spare spars of his own, the whaler was partially reequipped, and the two ships proceeded at their best speed northward toward Peru. The Chileans who had been captured on the *Sharon*, were treated with the utmost rigor. No distinction was made between officers and men. They were all forced below, being regarded as rebels and traitors. And they might expect a short shrift, indeed, at Callao, if they ever arrived there.

Captain Clough and the Americans, on the contrary, were the recipients of every courtesy.

When it came to providing them quarters, a difficulty at once arose. The *Esmeralda* happened to be short of deck officers, and two spare cabins in the wardroom were allotted to the Americans. Broadrib and Rice

occupied one, Storey was quartered with the junior lieutenant, and Captain Cueto, commenting upon Captain Clough's obvious fondness for the boy, Rey, expressed the hope that under the circumstances the American would be willing to share the other cabin with the youngster. Promptly checking an involuntary protest from Audrey, Clough at once agreed to the suggestion.

It was a natural, and indeed an inevitable proposal, the more necessary, according to Captain Cueto, because the spare cabin in his own quarters was, unfortunately, undergoing extensive alterations to fit it for use by a civil functionary he was to receive at Callao, and take back to Spain. It was a terrible position in which the young American was thus involved, but there was absolutely no escape from it. To disclose the fact that the seeming boy was in truth a woman, was impossible under the circumstances. There would have been no possibility of assuring her the respect so necessary to her comfort and well being. The secret had to be kept. It was with a heavy heart, albeit a wildly beating one, that Clough followed Audrey into the small confines of the cabin allotted them. They confronted each other, color fading out of the girl's face, leaving it white and cold, while the blood crimsoned Captain Clough's weather-beaten cheeks.

"Oh, what is to be done now?" whispered Audrey, shooting a terrified glance at the sailor. "Why did you stop me a moment ago? Now it's too late!"

"Audrey," answered the other desperately, "There is no way out of it. I can't let that Spaniard know you

are a woman. I don't like his looks, anyway. I don't know what might happen."

"But we can't live here in this little cabin—together——"

"We must and we can," answered the American firmly. "There are two berths. You will take either of them. We will use the blankets of the other for a curtain. I will sleep on the deck here. I will turn in after you do, and turn out before you are awake. You must trust me. There is no other way."

"Be it so," answered the young woman quickly, after a moment's thought. "As you say, there is no other way. I will trust you. I do. See, this will prove it."

And as she spoke, she slipped close to him and freely kissed him as she had that night at the wheel. Clough understood perfectly that if she were not entirely sure of herself and him, she would never have ventured upon the caress in such circumstances. And the privilege increased the obligation. He was in every way bound. He made a good beginning in that he did not clasp her in his arms, as he might have done. When she drew away, he answered simply,

"O, Audrey, that makes it harder, but it also makes it certain."

The girl nodded, comprehending fully his meaning.

"You will tell the others how it is?" she asked. "I couldn't bear to have them think——"

"They are true men," said Captain Clough, "they could not be brought to think evil of you, dearest Audrey, whatever opinion they might hold of me."

Thus the difficult matter was arranged, and the dis-

covery, with all its possible consequences, staved off, for the present, at any rate.

Aside from the fact that they were, in a measure, prisoners, and that they had lost their ship, their lot was fairly comfortable, but the Americans were like smouldering volcanoes. Every time they looked ahead at the *Sharon*, lumbering along with the *Esmeralda* convoying her under shortened canvas, their rage grew greater. They matured plan after plan for recapturing her, every one of which was more futile than the one which preceded it.

The *Esmeralda* was a large ship with a full crew; she had put forty men on the whaler. The five Americans were helpless, would have been helpless even if they had been aboard the *Sharon*. That did not make them any the less angry, but Captain Clough prevailed upon them to dissemble their hatred and rage, and they at least appeared to be outwardly contented.

As for himself, he faithfully adhered to his plan, but naturally, during the day, he was thrown more intimately in the society of Audrey in the little stateroom than he had been on the *Sharon*, and with every passing hour his passion deepened. The new intimacy had its effect upon her also. For one thing, it rendered her charming and evasive coquetry impossible. For how could one coquet in a small cabin like that they occupied together, under such circumstances and conditions. She surrendered her conduct to her heart completely, and showed that she loved him with an intensity of feeling that matched his own.

CHAPTER XVI

SPANISH HONOR IS UPHELD

OBSERVATIONS one day indicated that the *Esmeralda* and her prize had arrived within thirty leagues of the harbor of Callao, on the coast of Peru, and that at the six-knot rate of sailing they were making, the next twelve hours or so would see them safely in the harbor.

Save for a few whalers, they had not raised a sail in the long cruise since the capture of the *Sharon*. The ocean had been swept clean of Spanish commerce by the Chileans, and that new republic had not yet developed any considerable sea trade of its own. It was suspected by the Spaniard, however, that Admiral Cochrane, with a squadron, was off the coast somewhere. Hence the bright outlook that had been kept, for the Spaniards feared Lord Dundonald as much as they hated him.

It was about two bells in the second dog watch, or five o'clock in the afternoon, when a sail, which had been reported some two hours earlier, had risen far enough above the horizon to disclose the fact that she was a large ship, standing in toward the coast. Two other sails had been sighted later, far astern of the first one, and the new arrivals appeared to be sailing in company. They were men-of-war, undoubtedly.

That could only mean one thing. The Spanish naval

force, with the exception of the *Esmeralda*, had been eliminated by a succession of brilliant exploits on the part of the Chileans, mostly engineered and directed by the great Earl of Dundonald in person.

The Spaniards had scrutinized the approaching ships with great care, and had finally decided that they belonged to Admiral Cochrane's cruising squadron. The Spanish captain was brave enough and he was a man of some skill in seamanship. The strangers were still far out of gun-shot range. The wind was light, and it was probable—nay, certain—that darkness would cover the sea long before the newcomers got within range.

If he had been alone, he would have put up his helm and made a quick run for the harbor. But he had his prize to look out for. He knew now how valuable she was. He believed he had a clear case in law and abundant justification in marine ethics for seizing the *Sharon*. He did not want to lose her. Prizes had been few and far between for the Spanish Navy during the South American Revolution, and they were not lightly to be given up. He decided on the bold course of running down toward the stranger, intending to keep safely out of range of the leading ship for which, by the way, it was quite obvious his own was a good match, both in sailing and for fighting, and while he drew their attention to himself, give the deep laden, sluggish prize, a chance to escape.

Fortunately, the smaller ships of Cochrane's squadron, if it were indeed his, had been so far outsailed by his flagship as to be negligible in any calculations of possible danger Captain Cueto might make. Conse-

quently, the call of all hands was presently succeeded by the beat to quarters, alike in every navy on the seas, in its thrilling cadences.

Audrey McRae had never sailed on a man-of-war, but Captain Clough had seen naval service, and so also had Broadrib, while Rice and Storey had cruised in letters-of-marque, or privateers. These worthy seamen heard the rattling of the drums which, of course, they recognized with mingled feelings. It brought back old times, when they had fought under their respective flags against one another, or against the French or Spanish, as the case might be. It quickened their pulses and caused their hearts to beat faster as the drums rolled the familiar call throughout the ship, and the men ran eagerly to their appointed battle stations, casting loose and providing the guns, sanding the decks, belting on their cutlasses and pistols, donning boarding caps of steel, and seizing their pikes and other weapons, while the marines and topmen looked to their small arms.

They did not comport themselves like an American or English crew. There was much confusion, little order, and great noise. Things moved slowly in spite of much apparent hurry. It was with the utmost difficulty that the officers finally got the men at their stations in the batteries, tops, and on deck, and quieted them down.

The five Americans grouped themselves aft on the quarter deck, just forward of the mizzen mast, taking care to keep out of everybody's way. The captain of the ship saw them there, but made no effort to send them

below or otherwise interfere with their liberty. And they were left in this position of vantage, interested spectators of all that transpired. Captain Clough did suggest that Audrey go below to the safety of the cable tiers, but the girl met the suggestion with withering contempt. The sympathies of the Americans were entirely with the Chileans. They hoped for the capture of the frigate and the recapture of the prize so unlawfully seized.

When some measure of quiet had been restored, the captain deemed it proper, in accordance with the custom of his country, which was indeed quite general then and thereafter, to address his crew.

"My brave men," he began, "yonder are the ships of the enemy. We are but one. They are three. Yet loyalty to our gracious King, to the great traditions of the navy of Spain, and to our manhood, as officers and seamen, demands that we have a nearer look at them in the hope that we may strike a blow for our flag, and also insure the escape of our valuable prize, in the proceeds of which we shall all share. I am sure that you will do your full duty if we should come to an exchange of shots, and therefore I have called you to your quarters, confident that you will support Spanish honor with Spanish arms."

"*Viva Espana! Viva el Rey! Hurrah for Spain! Long live the King!*" shouted the Spanish sailors heartily enough, their imaginations quickened by the clever suggestion of profit in the prize, which was enough to enthuse men so miserably paid originally, and so shamelessly robbed continuously.

Most of them had never been in action at all, knew little about it, and were still far enough away for the danger not to appear very imminent. The cheering, therefore, was spontaneous and hearty. It did not sound like cheering to the Americans. It was more like yelling, and they listened to the speech of the captain, which was delivered very floridly, with some little amusement and some little disgust.

Old Broadrib stepped to the side of the ship and expectorated violently into the sea to relieve his feelings, remarking, when he came back,

“Well, if they gits under Lord Cochrane’s broadsides, they’ll pipe a different tune, I’m thinkin’.”

Meanwhile, the captain continued to give orders. The sail trimmers went to the braces, the helm was put up, and the ship, which had been hard up on the wind, fell away on a course which would permit her, if both vessels stood on as they were, to pass ahead, and probably just out of range of the leading enemy which flew Cochrane’s flag. Signals had been made to the whaler, and under every stitch of canvas she could bear, she bore up on her course for the harbor. The starboard battery of the *Esmeralda* was now manned, and the final preparations were made for action, again with more noise and confusion.

“We didn’t do it like that on the old *Essex*,” said Captain Clough to the others. “We scarcely made a sound. But here! Did you ever hear such a racket, Broadrib?”

“Never in my life, sir. Which we did it the same as you in the British Navy. I was light yardman on

the *Victory* at Trafalgar an' we was that still when we was a leadin' down on the French line that you could hear every word Lord Nelson said. We all wanted to hear him, too. I was stationed aft on the quarter deck as a sail trimmer. I well remember that 'ere signal that he had bent on an' set."

"You mean——"

"*'England expects every man to do his duty'*," returned the sailor simply. "Sink me, but he was a fighter, that little man. He wasn't half the size of Lord Cochrane, but he was as brave as a lion. I never seed such grievin' as when he was shot. They treated him different from Lord Cochrane, an' yet I always believe that if they'd have give my old cap'n half a chance he'd have been as great a man as Admiral Nelson. I must tell you 'bout that battle some day," continued the old seaman. "When we got through it, we was well nigh a wreck, but you'd ought to've seen the French ships we'd pounded. Why, sir, when we smashed through their line we emptied our whole broadside into the French admiral's stern an' fairly tore it to pieces, an' then we turned loose on t'other side into the next ship. I disremembers its name. I never seed guns sarved faster than on that day."

"Well, we served them right rapidly on the *Essex* down there at Valparaiso."

"Yes, sir, you did, you did that," said old Broadrib ungrudgingly. "You made a fine fight, you Americans. It was as hot there in its way as in Trafalgar Bay."

"I never knew you had been on the *Victory* with Lord Nelson," observed Audrey.

"Lord love you, child, there's a lot of places I've been you never knowed of, an' some you ain't goin' to know of neither," muttered the old man, laughing rather grimly.

Just here a midshipman came up, and with the captain's compliments, requested the Americans to cease talking so loud, as it disturbed him.

"Pretty cheeky," muttered Captain Clough in his beard, "with all that chattering going on forward."

But, of course, there was nothing for it but to comply with the request or command. It seems that the Spanish captain had caught the words "Trafalgar" and "Nelson," and as that was a great defeat for Spanish arms, he did not relish any discussion of it before what might be a fierce battle, from the Spanish point of view.

There was no doubt about the character of the strangers now, for they all broke out Chilean flags at their mastheads. In answer to this display, the captain ordered the Spanish flag hoisted, and the two self-confessed enemies approached each other rapidly.

Now the *O'Higgins*, named after the President of Chile, which was the flagship of Admiral Cochrane, was old and leaky, with a very foul bottom. The other ships were not in much better case. As bad a sailor as the Spaniard was, she easily had the heels of the entire Chilean squadron. That the latter was in such bad condition was not due to any slackness or negligence of the admiral's, but to the wretched inefficiency of the Chilean naval administration, to the scarcity of docks, and the prime necessity for keeping the force constantly at sea in whatever condition.

The *Esmeralda* gone, the whole coast would be clear of Spanish cruisers, and until more were sent from Spain, Chile would have a chance to refit her ships, but not until then would it be prudent to lay up the Chilean squadron. Lord Cochrane resorted to every expedient known to the nicest art of seamanship, of which he was master in the fullest measure, to accelerate the speed of his old frigate. Tackles were clapped on the sheets and halliards which were bowsed taut until the sails were set as flat as boards. By means of whips and buckets on the yard arms, they were wetted down from royals to courses to make them hold more wind. Every stitch of canvas was set, of course, including such studding sails as could be carried. And while by these and other expedients, he added perhaps half a knot to the way of the ship in the pleasant air then blowing, the Spanish frigate still retained her sailing superiority, which her crew, after some moments of anxiety, realized with much inward satisfaction which, as usual, they expressed volubly until commanded to be silent.

The four American sailors and the girl watched the two ships approach with the greatest interest and excitement.

"What wouldn't I give," said old Broadrib in a whisper, "to be aboard that ship with my old cap'n."

"Well," said Clough, "I would like to be aboard her myself, but this ship has the heels of her. There's no doubt about that."

"I would rather be aboard the *Sharon*," said Rice.

"And so would I," added Storey.

"That, of course," admitted Captain Clough.

"Why can't we get aboard that ship, Captain Clough?" suggested Audrey, pointing aft to the vainly pursuing Chilean frigate.

"And how would you go about it, my child?" asked Broadrib, carefully lowering his deep voice so as not to draw the attention of the Spanish captain upon him.

"Why, take one of the boats from this ship tonight and row down to her," answered the girl simply.

Old Broadrib at once exploded with laughter in his big hand, but Captain Clough looked suddenly interested.

"There's something in what she says," he remarked. "Maybe we can steal a boat and slip away."

"What'd be the objek of it?" asked Broadrib.

"Well," returned Clough, "we've got a pretty good idea that the Spaniards will never give up the *Sharon*. Of course, we could report the matter to our government, but it is a long way to Washington, and it would be a long time before they would answer. If we could get back our ship and get away with her without reporting to anybody, it would be the quickest and the cheapest method of settling our difficulties, wouldn't it?"

"Right you are, sir," replied old Broadrib, upon whom light was dawning. "I begins to see what you mean. 'Cause it stands to reason that unless he's changed mightily from what he was when I knowed him, Lord Cochrane yonder ain't goin' to rest until he's got this ship. Why, it was a bigger job takin' out the *Gamo*, which I ain't never told you that yarn yet, but if he done that, he kin do this. An' inasmuch as we rescued

them fellers of his'n from the *San Martin*, he is apt to deal generously with us should he capture the *Esmeralda* an' retake the *Sharon*."

"Of course," said Captain Clough, "the Earl of Dundonald—to give him his proper, though unfamiliar title—is a gentleman, and has been trained in the best traditions of the English Navy. When he learns that we have been unjustly deprived of our ship, he will be anxious to help us get it back without making any bones about it or claiming any salvage or anything of the kind, I think."

"I'm sure of it, too, sir," assented the old harpooner heartily. "I makes no doubt on it at all, 'specially when he larns that the chief owner is a girl to delight a sailor's heart, like this 'un."

"Well, then, let's steal a boat and get away when it is dark, and tell him our story," urged Audrey, not concealing her pleasure at the old man's praise, which she was glad Captain Clough had heard.

"That's a good deal easier said than done, Audrey," answered Clough quickly to the excited young woman. "But we will look into it. You three wait here," he continued. "Broadrib and I will stroll quietly aft and take a look at the dingey hanging over the stern. If there is a way to lower it, without being noticed, I believe I will try it if the opportunity presents itself. We mustn't risk you, though."

"Well, I'm with you, Cap'n Clough," said Broadrib, interrupting a protest from Rey.

"And so are we all, sir," said the two sailors.

By this time the two big ships were much nearer to-

gether. The Spanish captain was getting rather uneasy. The nearer he got to the Chilean admiral, the more he remembered the latter's characteristics, and the blacker and fiercer the great Scotsman loomed before his imagination. The possibilities of an unexpected catastrophe in conflict with *El Diabolo*, came more and more vividly before him.

Suddenly he gave an order to one of his aides. The young midshipman saluted, disappeared below, and ran along the gangway to the lieutenant in command of the forward division of guns. The men had been lounging around in very unseamanlike ways, but at a sharp word of command, they got to their positions awkwardly, the guns were trained, the gun captains seized the lock strings, and at another word of command, the four guns of the forward division on the main deck crashed out in unison.

Then everybody on the spar deck, in defiance of drill and discipline, crowded to the lee rail to watch the effect of the discharge. The shots fell far ahead of the *O'Higgins*, and after skipping along the water, disappeared beneath the sea.

"Why, he isn't within a half a mile of gun-shot range," said Rice, with deep disgust. "Look, Storey!"

But some contagion of excitement suddenly possessed the Spaniards, and giving their guns greater elevation, division after division, in accordance with Captain Cueto's permission, fired in the direction of the *O'Higgins*. Even the lighter spar-deck guns, perfectly useless except at close range, added their quota to the confusion and din. Lord Cochrane, of course, made no

reply. It was entirely foolish to waste powder and shot in bombarding the sea. But once having started the firing, nothing appeared to be able to stop the Spaniards, and they swept on in a cloud of smoke, pouring a rapid and entirely harmless fire into the surrounding atmosphere.

By this time the sun had set, and as there was no moon, darkness was already stealing over the sea. After fifteen minutes of this futile firing, to which, as has been noted, no reply whatever was made by the Chilean ship, the order to cease firing was given, and after some confusion and irregular shooting, it was obeyed.

As the smoke blew away, they saw through the gathering twilight, the *O'Higgins* apparently unharmed. She was nearer than before, much nearer, in fact, but still not within range. The officers of the Spanish frigate professed to discover all kinds of damage that had been done by their fire, as they ogled the Chilean through their night glasses, but Captain Clough declared to the others that she was unharmed.

"Why, none of them shots fell within a cable's length of her," added old Broadrib, in deep disgust.

"My brave men," said the captain once more, addressing the crew, "you have nobly supported the honor of Spain. In the face of a vastly superior force, you have dashed gallantly at the enemy. You have exchanged broadsides with them," continued that worthy officer, who perhaps, fancied that what he said was true. "You have inflicted great damage upon them and have sustained none yourself. It is a glorious day

for Spanish arms. His Majesty, the King, shall hear how nobly you have comported yourselves. Your action has also insured the safety of your rich prize, which is lost in the darkness. And now, having thus abundantly proved your courage, we can honorably retire before the more powerful enemy."

This enthusing address was received with frantic cheers. The men evidently considered themselves heroes. Iturbe, the senior lieutenant, passing by, remarked to Captain Clough:

"You see now, gentlemen, how the brave Spaniards comport themselves under fire. It is not with brutal fists and hard heads that we excel, but in courage and honor."

The captain now called to his first lieutenant, and that executive officer, having received instructions, secured the batteries, dismissed the men from their quarters, braced up the yards, put the helm down, and the *Esmeralda* soon came by the wind again, sailing directly away from the Chileans on her course for Callao. As Captain Cueto had said, the *Sharon* was out of sight in the darkness, and it did not appear likely that the slow-moving Chilean squadron could overhaul her before she dropped anchor in the harbor of Callao.

CHAPTER XVII

A HALF WAY SUCCESS

BY THIS time, nothing could be seen of the *Sharon* in the darkness. Her prize master had had the wit to put out all his lights as he slipped away. Satisfied that he still had the heels of the *O'Higgins*, Admiral Cochrane's flagship, the *Esmeralda*, made a great display of her own lights, and as there was nothing whatever to be gained by concealment, the running lights of the *O'Higgins* were presently visible from the deck of the Spaniard.

By the time the *Esmeralda* had come by the wind, and got on her course again, it had grown completely dark. The Spanish captain ordered wine to be served to all hands before the watches were set, and the watch below was piped to its supper. There was a great deal of confusion on the deck, a good deal of crowding to the waist where the wine was served, even the officers looking on with amused interest at the undisciplined jollification. Captain Clough and Broadrib, who had previously carefully, if rapidly, examined the ropes and gripes securing the dingey on the stern, the smallest boat of the ship, took advantage of the situation despite the desperate risk to cast off the gripes and slack away the falls a little so that the dingey swung half way between the stern and the water ready for a quick drop. The

other three Americans meanwhile crowded around them and covered them from sight as if staring after the pursuing ships. They also saw to it that the plug was in the hole made to let out the rain while she hung to her davits, and that the dingey was provided with oars.

She was a light boat and the four Americans even without Audrey to steer could easily manage her in such weather. There would be little or no risk in the light air then blowing and the smooth sea consequent upon. But no matter what the risk they were now fully determined upon escape if it were possible.

They had barely completed their preparations when they observed the captain coming aft. To break away from the taffrail upon which they had been leaning and advance to intercept him was the work of an instant.

"A warm engagement, Señores," said Captain Cueto taking off his gold-laced cap and wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Very hot, sir," said Clough coolly, whereat old Broadrib had to put his hand to his mouth to keep from exploding again, and Audrey had a desperate struggle to prevent a snicker from escaping.

"You saw how fearlessly we advanced against such a superior force and the smartness with which we engaged?"

"I certainly did, sir," said Clough most heartily. He had no desire on earth to vex the Spanish captain, on the contrary. "Your fire was magnificent, so rapid, so continuous, so——"

"Do you think we did any damage?" interrupted the eager Spaniard.

"How can anyone doubt it, Señor," answered Clough speciously, "when it so overwhelmed the enemy that he was unable to make any return to it at all?"

"I noticed that," said the gratified captain.

"Of course, we all noticed it. Didn't we, shipmates?"

"Aye, aye, sir, that we did," came from the Americans, who had followed with keen appreciation their young officer's diplomatic lead.

"It was heroic, Señor," ventured Audrey smiling as if in congratulation.

"The cowardly Chileans," said the captain grandiloquently, and obviously greatly pleased with the flattery he had evoked, "were probably paralyzed with fear when they saw the approach of my great frigate. I have no doubt that they probably ran below as we opened fire. Yet, I have heard that *Almirante Cochran* was a brave man—for an Englishman."

"Yes, you're right there, sir," said old Broadrib. "For an Englishman, he certainly was a brave man, but of course, when you contrast him with a Spaniard"—here Mr. Clough gave him a warning dig in the ribs with his elbow—"that don't count for much," gritted out Broadrib in deep disgust; he had intended to say something quite different.

"I should have liked nothing better than to have come to close quarters with the Chilean pigs and their beef-eating admiral," continued the Spanish captain more and more proud of his extraordinary heroism. "My brave crew were thirsting for blood, but I have a

higher duty to perform, Señores. I will entice them under the guns of the forts at Gallao and then, with my ship, we will destroy them."

"Quite so," observed Clough cynically. "I think that is just about the way it will happen."

"It seems to me they are overhauling us, Captain Cueto," maliciously interposed Audrey suddenly.

"What!" exclaimed the captain instantly swinging about in great alarm and staring aft. "Oh, no, Señor. We are much the faster ship," he added in great relief.

His glance had reassured him. The *O'Higgins* was certainly further away than she had been.

"Señores," he went on complacently, "in honor of this great victory, it would be a great pleasure if you would take supper with me. You, Captain Clough and you Mr. Broadrib and you others as well."

"Do you mean me, sir, too?" asked Audrey boldly.

"Certainly, my boy," said the captain with whom she was quite a favorite.

"We would be delighted, sir," said Captain Clough.

"Very well. If you will come below to my cabin, I have no doubt that my steward has everything ready."

The captain turned and led the way, the others following.

"We couldn't wish for anything better," whispered Clough who lingered behind to speak to the harpooner privately.

He rapidly outlined to old Broadrib a brilliant little plan of action. The old man grinned from ear to ear.

"At tricks," he whispered, "Cap'n Clough, you're almost equal to Lord Cochrane, hisself, an' I can't say

no more'n that. We'll do it. Lemme explain to the men an' the little lady yonder."

"No, we can't, we might be overheard," answered Clough as he descended the ladder. "Say nothing about it. You and I will be enough. The men are quick-witted and will catch on. As for Miss McRae I don't want her to take any risk whatever, and it's not necessary. Men stand by with your fists, or table knives, or whatever you can grab when the time comes," he whispered to Storey and Rice as the five entered the captain's cabin.

Elated by the great victory he had won and the brilliance of his martial exploit, and filled with a profound consciousness of his high courage and bravery, the captain made a gala occasion of that dinner. The best the ship afforded was set before his five guests and they ate heartily.

Captain Clough sat on the right side of the captain, Broadrib on the other side, one of the *Esmeralda's* officers and a midshipman who had, of course, been invited as was customary, sat next to Captain Clough and Broadrib, Rice and Storey sat next to them while Audrey had a place of her own at the very end of the table.

Clough and Broadrib had not bargained for the lieutenant and the midshipman but they decided that under the circumstances the plan they had rapidly matured must be carried out nevertheless.

After the cloth had been removed, cigars and champagne in honor of this occasion had been produced and the stewards withdrew. All through the meal, Broad-

rib who could drink enough liquor to sink a ship without affecting him, proposed toast after toast to the brave Spanish officers, which they drank with a will. The Americans had, of course, joined in the toasting but taking their cue from Captain Clough, they had merely pretended to sip their glasses while the Spaniards drained theirs, and, of course, Audrey did not take anything but water.

Captain Clough also had lauded Spanish courage and Spanish bravery and seamanship to the skies. The Spanish captain with difficulty restrained himself from embracing the flattering Americans. The uproar and confusion were great. The hilarity and joy were manifest. At first it had attracted some notice from the officers on deck, but as it continued and as they realized what was toward, they paid no attention to it, which was exactly what Clough had counted upon. Finally old Broadrib arose.

"I wants to propose a final toast," he said lifting his glass, "to the gallant cap'n of the *Esmeralda*. I never seed a ship better handled or more boldly carried down to the enemy, or fiercer fought arterwards in all my long seafarin' life, gents, an' I've seed the great Lord Nelson hisself. I makes bold to say that if Captain Cueto had been in the Spanish line at Trafalgar we'd have been licked out of our boots, an' I'm proud to have been on his ship even as a peaceful observer on this glorious day," he went on with most egregious flattery which the half drunken Spanish captain swallowed without even winking.

"I echo the sentiments of my mate," said Clough

instantly rising to his feet. "Gentlemen, up all and let us drink this toast in bumpers."

The three Spaniards and the five Americans got to their feet; the Spaniards very uncertainly. They had looked on the wine cup not wisely, but too long. The captain at last attained a precarious standing position. He leaned forward uncertainly with his hand on the table and opened his mouth to reply in fitting terms to the compliments. The next minute he found himself in the air. Old Broadrib balling his fist struck him fairly and squarely on the chin. He was lifted up by the force of the blow and then plunged to the deck unconscious.

Captain Clough without saying a word, grabbed the Spanish lieutenant by the throat. Rice clapped his hand over the mouth of the midshipman just as he opened it to scream. The seizure was effected in an instant. It was a complete success.

"Storey," said Captain Clough shaking the Spanish lieutenant as he might a rat, "go to the help of Broadrib."

"Don't need no help, sir," answered Broadrib picking up the Spanish captain who was still incapable of speech.

He dropped him on a transom where he lay perfectly helpless, gasping. Of course, he would get his voice back as soon as he recovered his consciousness, but they would be away before he could give the alarm if they worked quickly.

"Unbuckle this officer's belt, Storey," said Clough.

He released his grip on the man for a minute and as he opened his mouth for air, he shoved a napkin into it.

The officer's hands were dragged to his sides. Captain Clough clasped the belt about them, drew it tight and buckled it and then shoved him down on another transom. The helpless midshipman was treated in exactly the same way.

Meanwhile, by Clough's direction, old Broadrib had gone into the after cabin, the captain's private room, and had got everything ready for lowering the dingey. While they were busy with the two men, the door suddenly opened and in came a steward. Audrey was the one who first saw him. The steward was a full-grown man and the girl could not have managed him alone. She seized him boldly nevertheless before he could open his mouth to yell and the next minute Rice and Storey were on him. They took the precaution after they gagged him and stowed him in a spare stateroom, to lock the door leading out from the cabin where they had dined. Unfortunately, however, the struggle had attracted attention on deck, and although the men in the cabin did not know it, the officer of the watch had already summoned assistance and was approaching the cabin door.

"Now, men," said Captain Clough in great satisfaction, "come on."

"What about these Spaniards, sir?" asked Rice.

"Leave them as they are. They'll be all right presently. Don't hurt them," was the answer of the officer.

He rapidly led the way through the captain's cabin. The three seamen clambered through the stern window into the boat, which was swinging just on a level with

the port sill, Broadrib took the yoke lines to steer, Rice and Storey looked out for the falls, Captain Clough and Audrey waited while they lowered the dingey, as silently as possible until she was waterborne whereupon Rice and Storey took their places on the thwarts and broke out the oars.

"Come on, sir, with the lady," said Boardrib softly.

The next minute a terrific uproar was heard from the ship. They had heard a knocking on the outer door as they left the captain's cabin, but of course, had given no heed to it.

The captain had come to, he had found his voice, he had yelled for help. Into the cabin had burst the officer of the watch and some of the marines of the ship. They were astonished at what they saw. A few words put them in possession of the facts.

Before Clough and Audrey could move the Spaniards swarmed into the after cabin. Clough shouting to Audrey to escape through the stern window seized a stool and leaped at the group of men. But Audrey did not obey. She was paralyzed with fear for the man she loved. He struck down the nearest man, but the others threw themselves upon him. They crowded between Clough and the woman hiding her from his view. He fought them off gallantly and supposing Audrey had obeyed his orders he took advantage of a lull in the conflict, since no Spaniard cared to risk a broken head and Captain Cueto well in the rear was screaming out orders that the American must be taken alive, to leap on the port sill preparatory to dropping into the boat below. He had to relinquish his guard to do this and the

nearest Spaniard a big sergeant of marines seized him to haul him back.

No one had paid any attention to Audrey, but she saw her lover's peril and boldly threw herself upon the sergeant. She was only a girl. She could do little with the natural members a man would have used. She had one resource, however. In her passionate determination to free Captain Clough she bit the big sergeant's hand.

On the instant Clough recognized her. He had been straining backward from the sergeant. As Audrey's teeth met in the latter's hand he released the American with a violent backward thrust. Clough strove to retain his position, to clamber back into the cabin, for he would not have deserted the girl for worlds. The effort was vain. Calling out her name, seeing the sergeant tear his hand away and seize the collar of her jacket and shake the poor girl as a cat does a rat, the American fell backward and splashed into the sea.

Broadrib, who with the others had heard the noise of the brief encounter which was over almost as soon as it had begun, directed that the painter be cast loose, and as the boat whirled away he seized the officer and drew him aboard.

"My God, sir," he began, "what's happened and where's Miss Audrey?"

"The cowardly brutes have got her, damn them," answered the enraged lover. "Pull back to the ship men, for God's sake. We can't leave her there alone."

But old Broadrib shook his head, he signed to Rice and Storey who had bent to their oars.

"It's useless, sir. She sails six feet to our one. God knows I'd cheerfully give my life for that little lady. But our only hope now is in Lord Cochrane. He'll git her for us, an' if aught happens to her he'll make them pay dear, sir, an' mates all."

Captain Clough stared after the rapidly moving frigate. Then he buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud. He could not gainsay the wisdom of the old harpooner.

The Spaniards on the frigate now burned a flare aft and in its radiance caught sight of the boat. Their stern chasers had been loaded and had not been fired. They hastily primed and pulled the lock strings and two bright flashes of light burst out in the darkness followed by two sharp reports. In their excitement they had not aimed the guns and consequently one shot went wide while the other passed far overhead and fell beyond the dingey.

Broadrib steering, Rice and Storey at the oars rowed like mad. They were soon out of the light cast by the frigate and although the stern-chase guns continued to fire at them, by Captain Clough's direction they had pulled out of the line of fire and the bullets went harmlessly into the sea as before. Of course, the Spanish ship could have backed its main yard and lowered a couple of cutters and could have searched until the runaways were found and brought back, but Clough had counted on the fact that the *Esmeralda* would not dare make any such attempt because of the nearness of the *O'Higgins* and Admiral Cochrane.

The *Esmeralda* had a superiority in sailing, but not

enough to throw away time and distance in searching for and pursuing the dingey in the black night. The Spanish captain black with rage had to swallow the insult that had been put upon him by these daring Americans. He swore that if he ever got a chance he would wreak full vengeance upon them. Meantime he held one of them and he would begin with the boy.

The Americans very depressed in spirit pulled away in the direction of the oncoming *O'Higgins* whose lights were also clearly visible.

"Come to think of it," said Captain Clough sadly, "this suggestion came from Miss McRae. If we can board the *O'Higgins* and get back our ship and herself with it, it will all be due to the youngster, as it was before."

"You kin be sure of one thing, sir an' mates," said old Broadrib, "that if we gits aboard yon ship an' tells Lord Cochrane our story, his lordship will never rest until he captures the *Esmeralda* an' the *Sharon*, an' restores the lady to us. Lord, did you ever see anythin' look so foolish as that cap'n did when I was tellin' him he was the greatest seaman that ever sailed the waters, that if he had been at Trafalgar we'd have been licked? Why he swallowed the whole thing down. As a matter of fact, them Spaniards an' Frenchies that day did jest what this one did this day. They fired about half their powder an' ball at our ships afore we got near 'em. We waited an' reserved our fire until we was in the middle of 'em an' then we gave it to 'em. I guess nobody that was there will ever forgit it. We are out of that mess nicely, sirs, an' I've kind of a feelin' we're goin' to git

on the *O'Higgins* an' git back our ship an' the little lady we all loves unharmed. Lord Cochrane is the kind of a man that'll enjoy a yarn like this we've got to spin an' we can depend on him doin' everything for a woman. It's after his own way of doin' business."

"I hope so," said Clough sadly. "Give way strong, lads. Broadrib lay your course to bring us alongside of that ship yonder. But I'd give all my lay on the *Sharon* and all I ever expect to be worth to be back on the *Esmeralda* with the poor girl. I wonder what is happening!" he added desperately.

This was what was toward. After clearing the cabin of the crew Captain Cueto advanced toward Rey still held by the sergeant.

"You traitorous, ungrateful young dog," he roared. "I'm glad I've got one of you still. Sergeant, tell the officer of the watch to call all hands to witness punishment."

"What are you going to do?" faltered the girl, swiftly suspecting what was in the enraged captain's mind.

"Strip you to the waist, master impudence, and flog you at the gratings before the crew, as you deserve."

CHAPTER XVIII

BRAVE BUT A WOMAN

AUDREY McRAE was as brave a girl as any that ever drew the breath of life. Naturally of an intrepid disposition, her long career as a boy, the association on equal terms with the hardy men to whom danger in the pursuit of their venturesome calling was an every-day affair, the scenes of bloodshed and peril through which she had passed, all had intensified her native courage. In an ordinary emergency she was almost as fearless as Benjamin Clough, whom she loved. But there was that in Captain Cueto's threat which almost stopped her heart.

To be paraded, stripped to the waist, before a Spanish crew! The idea drove the blood to her skin in a mighty wave, whose instant ebb left her paler than the crest where the wave white-waters and breaks. Nor was it of the awful agony of the flogging—even in the gentlest hand the cat-o'-nine-tails is no caresser—of which she thought, though that might make the most nervously insensible quail. It was not the pain but the shame that left her white and shaken. The threatened affront to her modesty, her womanhood, was that from which she shrank.

It did not occur to her that she had only to discover her sex to the captain to assure herself an immunity

from the promised flogging. Indeed she realized instinctively, intuitively, that such a discovery, while it would save her from one peril would expose her to another equally unbearable, unsupportable.

And that has been the disadvantage of woman in warfare since Tubal Cain forged the sword for his father Lamech. A man has only his life to lose, while many a woman has cursed the fate that spared her life, and left her shamed—through no fault of her own either. That is one of the reasons why woman can not stand upon an absolute parity with man in the world's battlefields. No matter how high her spirit, how much above proof her courage, how abnormally strong her body, how entire her consecration, she is handicapped for success because she has so much more to lose.

Poor Audrey did not reason all this out. She simply felt it, and the realization made her helpless. Her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth. She could only stare at the infuriated captain. He made a horrid picture, his mind obscured by rage and hate, his face bloody from blow and fall. No wonder that the girl, all a woman now, despite her jaunty boy's clothes, shrank from him. It was not until the big sergeant released her and turned away to deliver his captain's order that she awoke to frantic futile action. In turn she seized the sergeant to delay him and desperately appealed to the captain.

"No," she pleaded, her voice rising to the shrill cadences of a frightened woman, which would have betrayed her to a man less blinded by his passion than

the captain, "no, you won't do that. You can't do that."

"Can I not?" was the grim answer. "I am master here. You shall see."

"But I am only a boy—I—you could not hurt me—you would not——"

"Aye, that I would and gladly, boy though you are."

"He was man enough to bite through my hand, excellency," growled the sergeant.

"Quite so. He has tasted blood, the young tiger cub. We'll let a little more of it out of him. Go, Sergeant."

"Oh, for the love of God, wait," screamed the frantic girl. "Have mercy. You may seek it yourself some day. Captain Clough will make you pay if you do this, he——"

But the allusion was an unfortunate one. Captain Cueto recalled all he had suffered at the hands of the American. With a Spanish oath he gritted out.

"I owe that pig of an Americano a score. In part I can pay it on your back."

"But he will exact fearful vengeance. He loves me."

"'Loves you!'" repeated the captain, in some surprise, and then he laughed. "Fool!" he exclaimed. "Men should love women, not boys. As for his vengeance, you have a proverb I think, 'First catch your hare,' and in Spanish we have a similar one, '*Entrampa primero su liebre antes que guisarlo.*' But I have trifled too long with a mere boy. I promise myself much pleasure and some alleviation to these hurts to

my pride and my person in seeing you writhe and bleed under the lash."

He nodded to the sergeant, who at once left the cabin, easily avoiding the girl's effort at holding him. The captain continued, "Your friends will, doubtless, guess what is happening to you; and it will take away some of their joy in their escape."

The captain now seized a napkin from the table, poured some water upon it and applied it to his bruised and bleeding face. At the same instant the call of the boatswain and his mates was heard echoing above the decks without the cabin as all hands were summoned to witness punishment. The sound aroused the desperate girl to action. The captain's attention to his wounds gave her a half opportunity. She could not fly. She could strike. Quick as thought she seized the heavy broad-bladed carving knife from the table and struck violently at the captain. But for a sudden roll of the ship, which was caught at that instant by a heavier swell, she had killed him.

As it was he barely evaded the first blow and, although she struck and thrust at him again and again with the fury of despair as he leaped toward her, he succeeded in seizing her at the expense of but a slight wound. He disdained to call for help to master a slender boy. Audrey, however, was now as mad as the captain. She writhed and struggled in his hands. As supple as an eel she broke away from him. The man grappling for her throat caught the collar of her shirt and as she wrenched herself loose, the stout linen tore from neck to waist.

Captain Cueto stopped dead. He stared at the girl, her womanhood now fully and unmistakably revealed in spite of the quick gesture by which she drew the torn pieces of the rent garment together across her virginal breast, while the color flamed into her cheeks again.

"A woman!" exclaimed the captain, harshly. "*Dios mio, una Mujer!*" Then he laughed again and his laughter was more menacing and terrible than had been his threat of bodily violence of the moments before. "A woman!" he repeated, dropping his voice at last. "Yes, a woman, you coward. Even you will hardly dare to flog a woman," answered Audrey, with a sudden return of her courage.

Now that the worst was known she would fight on and in other ways for her womanly heritage.

"Señorita," softly answered Cueto, with an insulting elaboration of courtesy, "if you had only spoken before——"

"The officer of the deck's compliments, excellency," said a midshipman, saluting as he came into the cabin, "the people are mustered, the grating is rigged, the boatswain and his mates are ready for the punishment of the American."

"Tell him to dismiss the people, pipe down the watch off. I have other plans for the American," was the captain's answer.

The midshipman cast a curious glance at Audrey, a wondering one at his captain and with the usual "Aye, Aye, sir," of acquiescence he retreated from the cabin.

"What do you mean to do?" asked Audrey, when they were alone.

"Señorita, there are other ways of punishing women when they are young and charming—" he bowed with a manner he thought and meant to be engaging but which Audrey found hideous and appalling. "Though perhaps most women would hardly consider it punishment to exchange a love like that common American pig's for mine—a gentleman of Spain."

"Do you mean—" flamed out the girl.

"You occupied the same cabin! Indeed, I do him too much honor in proposing to take his mistress for my own."

There was no mistaking the meaning of that. Audrey slowly drew nearer to him, while he watched her alert and ready.

"You can't understand a gentleman," she said, with bitter contempt. "He loves me as I love him. We were in that cabin into which you forced us, as brother and sister——"

The Spaniard laughed, but the girl went on, drawing slowly nearer to him as she spoke.

"We are to be married at the first opportunity and——"

"Not after I have done with you," interrupted the captain.

And then Audrey, who had trembled and gone white and had begged for her honor before, struck him in the face with all the power of her stout young arm—for all she was a woman.

It was a marvelous transformation.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ADMIRAL SUGGESTS THE EASIEST WAY

NOW the two ships, the *Esmeralda* and the *O'Higgins*, had been sailing in line ahead, that is, the one immediately behind the other on the same course. Consequently it required no hard rowing to bring the Spanish frigate's dingey within hail of the Chilean flagship. Indeed, about all that was really necessary was for the American oarsmen to keep the small boat from being driven off the course by the send of the rolling sea.

Although there was no moon the night was bright with stars and Captain Clough, who was an expert helmsman, like all whalemén, so maneuvered the boat that finally she was just in a position to be cleared by the onrushing Chilean ship. It was nice steering indeed and old Broadrib ventured upon a well-deserved compliment about it, hoping thereby to lighten the terrible sadness and anxiety of the young officer, as the peril of Audrey became more and more apparent to him.

At the proper time, as the *O'Higgins* was bearing down upon them, by Clough's direction they all raised their voices and shouted,

"Ship ahoy! Ahoy, the ship!"

And then they let forth a mighty yell for help in unison. Now it was evident to so good a seaman as Admiral Cochrane, that the *O'Higgins* had no chance

of catching the *Esmeralda* unless some accident occurred on the other ship whereby her rate of progress would be diminished, and in the pleasant breeze then prevailing such a thing as the carrying away of a spar was almost unthinkable, even for such clumsy seamen as manned the other frigate.

He realized that he could not prevent her from getting safely into the harbor of Callao before morning. He had held on in pursuit of her, however, because that was the only thing to do and because he was already maturing a plan for her capture.

In common with the other officers of his ship and his squadron, he had been surprised at the sudden outburst of futile firing from the stern chasers which had been observed a half an hour or so before. Of course, at the distance between the two ships, it was impossible to note the departure of so small a boat as the dingey, and indeed, but for the mighty hail, the *O'Higgins* might have passed it by in the darkness. But when attention was directed to it by the shouts of the men, it was soon discovered.

If he had the least chance of overtaking the other ship, the great admiral would not have stopped for anything or anybody. He was the kind of a man who spelled duty with the biggest kind of a "D." Old Broadrib had said that on one occasion a marine had fallen overboard from Cochrane's frigate, in the midst of a howling gale in the Bay of Biscay. The marine was a good swimmer. As he came up he waved his hand eagerly and expectantly at the ship. The young officer of the watch immediately prepared to heave to

the ship and called away a quarter-boat. The men came tumbling aft eager to attempt the rescue of their unfortunate shipmate. The storm was at its height. The sea was rolling tremendously, the waves breaking fiercely. Lord Cochrane, who at once assumed command, decided that there was no chance that any boat could live in such a sea and that if he allowed a boat to be lowered, he would be jeopardizing or throwing away the lives of a number of men in a vain effort to save one. To his experienced judgment the hazard was too great for the doubtful end.

Captain Cochrane sternly ordered the boat kept fast, sent the reluctant men back to their stations and kept the ship on her course. Other captains recognizing such a risk would have made the same decision, but few would have been able to retain the affection of their men after so doing. For men in such a case do not reason clearly; their sympathies and affections are aroused. They only see a shipmate afloat and no effort made to rescue him. They are prone to blame their captain.

In the larger quest before him Cochrane would not have hesitated to have sacrificed a small boat and her crew. But there was really no reason why he should not stop, and as the boat had obviously come from the Spanish frigate and as he reasoned that the firing indicated the deserters were enemies, and as they might have news, he instantly made up his mind to heave to his own ship and take them aboard.

By the time the *O'Higgins* had drawn a short distance ahead of the dingey, they saw her shoot up into the wind and back her main yard. As she slowly came

to rest the dingey drove alongside at the starboard gangway. Lights had been shown to indicate the way, and, Clough in the lead, the Americans filed aboard. The now useless boat was cast adrift as Rice, the last one to leave her, stepped out of her.

The flag captain, another Englishman named Crosbie, with a group of Chilean officers, met them at the gangway. He nodded as Captain Clough saluted him and, being a man of few words, simply said,

"Come aft to the quarter deck."

The little band of Americans headed by the officers of the Chilean flagship presently ranged themselves before the great seaman whose flag flew at the mizzen of the *O'Higgins*. Lanterns were at hand and in their light they saw a tall spare man, the redness of whose hair could be noticed beneath his cocked hat, who fixed upon them a pair of fierce, piercing gray eyes which looked at them over a big prominent nose which again rose above a square, determined jaw. On the whole, the effect was one of power, but the strong face was good to look at for its humor and its nobility.

The lanterns were held high by quartermasters so that all parties to the interview were plainly visible to one another.

"Who are you, sirs?" asked the great admiral in a clear, strong voice.

"We are Americans, sir."

"Beggin' your honor's pardon, one of us is English," burst out old Broadrib, edging his way into the light.

"Ah," said his lordship. He fixed a quick glance

on the latest speaker. His face broke into the sunniest of smiles. For so grim a countenance it was a transformation. "As I live," he exclaimed, "if it isn't old Bill Broadrib, my best bo's'n's mate!"

"Which it's the same, your honor, an' mighty lucky an' glad I am to be aboard your honor's ship again," said Broadrib, grinning from ear to ear.

"I am glad to recognize an old shipmate and acquaintance, sir," said the admiral, turning again to Captain Clough. "I beg your pardon for the interruption. Will you proceed?"

"He is well worth recognizing," said Clough, "for a better seaman and a truer heart I never have come across."

"Nor I," assented the admiral. "I am glad to see you, Broadrib. I need a few like you who know the old ways. But you were saying, sir?" he went on, with exquisite courtesy to the American.

"We are the survivors of the crew of the New Bedford whaler, *Sharon*," continued Clough. "You doubtless noticed two ships before the light fell."

"Yes," said the admiral, "but as one was, I observed, a merchant ship, I confined my attention to the other. I am not mistaken in thinking she was the Spanish frigate, *Esmeralda*, am I?"

"No, your lordship."

"And you come from her? That firing?"

"Was directed at us."

"I see you have a story to tell," said the admiral, pausing a moment. "Perhaps you will come below to my cabin and take a glass of wine with me while I hear

what you have to say. I am most interested, sir, in anything that concerns that Spanish ship."

"We are entirely at your service, sir," said Clough promptly.

The admiral turned and surveyed the little group of his own officers back of him.

"Miller," he said to the commander of marines, "will you accompany us, and you, Captain Crosbie?"

"Gladly, sir," answered both gentlemen, promptly.

"Any orders before we go below, sir?" added Crosbie.

"None," said the admiral. "Keep the ship on her course and endeavor not to lose sight of the *Esmeralda*. Call me when land is sighted in the morning, or if anything happens. Signal to the rest of the squadron to follow my motions."

"Very good sir," said Crosbie, saluting and giving the necessary orders to the officer of the watch.

Presently the admiral, the two officers in the Chilean service, both Englishmen by the way, and the four men from the *Sharon* entered the spacious cabin of the flag officer.

The *O'Higgins* had been captured from the Spaniards two years before. She was a sister ship to the *Esmeralda*. She had been fitted out for a flag like that vessel and the five Americans instantly felt at home in their new surroundings. Wine and biscuit were produced. The admiral gracefully drank the health of the newcomers and then asked for their story.

Rapidly Captain Clough narrated the exciting and dramatic incidents which had made the cruise of the

Sharon so remarkable, the admiral interposing with a shrewd question now and then, answered sometimes by Clough, more rarely by old Broadrib. Rice and Storey kept modestly silent in the background.

"And so," said Captain Clough, "we decided that our best chance would be to get away from the *Esmeralda* and get ourselves picked up by your lordship."

The admiral roared with laughter as the dinner which had resulted so disastrously for the Spanish captain was described to him.

"Gad!" he exclaimed. "I would like to have been there."

"That was a trick quite like some of your own, your honor," said old Broadrib.

"I never did anything better myself," said Lord Cochrane.

"That is high praise, sir," said Captain Clough, "for Broadrib here has been singing your praises over six thousand leagues of sea."

"Yes, he and I have been in some tight situations together. You remember that day on the *Imperieuse*, Broadrib, when we tackled the whole French fleet single-handed in Basque Roads?"

"Indeed, I does, your honor," laughed the old man. "I've told my shipmates, here, all about it."

"Do you remember the day we took the *Gamo*?"

"Do I," said Broadrib, reddening with pleasure at the notice he was receiving from the great man. "Why, sir, I've been promisin' to spin that yarn to Cap'n Clough an' these shipmates of mine, but I've never had no chance to do it yet."

"It isn't much of a yarn," said the admiral. "We ran the *Speedy* alongside the Spanish frigate and got so close to her that she couldn't fire into us, as we were so small we lay beneath her batteries. She couldn't depress her guns enough. Taking every man but the paymaster, who stood by the wheel, we went aboard the Spaniard and took her out of hand after a smart encounter. That was all."

In this way did the admiral refer to a most astounding feat of arms in which the little fourteen-gun brig, *Speedy*, with a crew of fifty men, captured the thirty-two gun frigate *Gamo* with a crew of three hundred. The *Speedy* boldly sailed alongside her big antagonist, as the admiral had said, and her men, with Cochrane in the lead, boarded the Spaniard under cover of the smoke of her own batteries firing uselessly.

"You forgot one little fact, though, your lordship," said old Broadrib, his sides shaking with merriment at the recollection.

"What was that?" asked the admiral, smiling reminiscently himself.

"Why, you had all us black our faces so when we bust on the Spaniards out of the smoke, they thought we was devils—which some of us was."

"I guess that is one reason why they call his lordship *El Diabolo* now," said Miller, the fleet marine officer who had already distinguished himself in many of the conflicts between the Chileans and the Spaniards and who had been several times severely wounded, but who always turned up smiling, ready for the next affray.

"It was hot work for a while, old shipmate," laughed the admiral, with the rest. "But we got her."

"Your lordship generally gits what you goes after," said old Broadrib.

"And I'll get the *Esmeralda*, too," said Cochrane with a sudden grim determination, "if I have to cut her out of Callao harbor from under the batteries of the forts and the guns of all New Spain. She shall not escape me. She is the principal ship left in the Spanish naval establishment and if we can get hold of her, the rest will be easy."

"I should like to see her captured," said Captain Clough, who had been consumed with anxiety to finish the story and tell the admiral about the loss of the boy, or the woman, but who had not felt that he could interrupt the great man out of hand, "after the way we were treated; but to be frank, sir, our interest is in regaining my own ship."

"Naturally," interposed Cochrane.

"But more than that, the missing member of my crew, sir," continued the American.

"Oh, the brave boy whom you mentioned! I do not see him," commented Cochrane, looking past Rice and Storey. "I trust you did not lose him, Captain Clough."

"I almost wish I had, your lordship," returned the American, encouraged by the sympathetic interest of the Englishman.

"How's that, sir?"

"My lord, in the struggle in the cabin, our plans miscarried a little. Help came. I was unfortunately

thrown, or fell rather, through the stern port, and the boy was left behind."

"That's bad," said Cochrane, "but it might be worse. They won't kill him, you know, whatever cruel treatment they mete out to him. And from what you have said, he's a tough youngster able to take care of himself."

"I must confess, Admiral, that the boy isn't a boy at all——"

"What, sir!" exclaimed Cochrane, as clean hearted as he was great, as all sorts of suspicions rushed into his mind.

"My lord," answered Clough, promptly reading the other man's thoughts, "Miss Audrey McRae is my affianced wife. She is as sweet and pure as any maid in England."

"I beg your pardon, my friend," was the instant reply. "This sad news that you tell me makes it the more imperative that we take the *Esmeralda* at once. And I shall do it, believe me."

"Thank you, thank you. But meanwhile——"

"The young lady is in God's protection, sir. And with His aid and her own mother-wit we have good warrant in hoping for her safety and speedy restoration to you. Meanwhile let us concert plans for our attack. You have a double interest and have every right to be consulted. Besides, I shall be glad for your advice, sir."

"An' if your honor pleases, there ain't no seaman afloat which can give it better, sir," broke in old Broadrib.

The admiral nodded pleasantly at the old man and then turned again to Clough.

"You say our people on the *San Martin* caused the loss of your ship to the *Esmeralda*, Captain Clough?"

"Yes, sir, and I thought it particularly ungrateful of the Chileans, since we saved their lives from the wreck of the *San Martin*, to seize our ship, especially as there wasn't the least bit of use in it. They hadn't a ghost of a show against the *Esmeralda*. And if they had held their course she might have passed us by without notice."

"Hardly likely," observed the admiral.

"Of course, much can be pardoned in men who are fighting, as it were, with a halter around their necks," interposed Captain Crosbie.

"The fate of Chilean prisoners is a hard one," said Major Miller. "They treat them like dogs when they don't kill them out of hand."

"That they do," assented the admiral. "And if I hadn't threatened to hang the Spanish prisoners I have taken——"

"And if you hadn't taken so many, sir," interposed Miller.

"Yes," said the admiral. "The balance is in our favor. Well, gentlemen," he continued, "although you did receive such hard treatment from the hands of Captain Gutierrez and the men of the *San Martin*, I think you have come out of it fairly well. I do not think the Spanish captain has any justification in law, international or otherwise, for seizing your ship. She belongs to you and you have first claim to her. It has

always been my principle when I had a right to fight for it to the last gasp. And if, in addition to a valuable property right, there is also a woman in great peril to fight for——”

He shut his eyes as he thought for a moment of some great fights he had waged against power and political parties and flagrant abuses in England, and the many times and ways he had fought for the brave woman who loved him and who was indeed worth fighting for.

“We intend to fight for her and the ship, sir,” answered Captain Clough earnestly, putting the two in their proper relation as he spoke.

“There are two courses open to you,” went on the admiral, who had a habit of settling everything himself in accordance with his own wishes.

“We would be glad of your lordship’s advice and counsel, sir,” said Captain Clough.

“And I give it gladly. The first course is to apply to the representatives of the United States in Lima, the capital of Peru.”

“We had thought of that, sir, but that is a slow and a tedious way.”

“Good. I also distrust the law and lawyers,” said the doughty seaman whose experience with both had been bitter. “Besides, I do not know how you would get at them. General San Martin is marching up the coast with an army, and everything is in a state of wild confusion. It would take a long time at best. You know what the law is, especially in Spanish America,” he said.

Mr. Clough nodded. He did not really know, but he had heard something about the law's delay, and he had a sailor's distrust of any law but that of the sea.

"And whatever we might be willing to do about the ship, the lady can't wait. To deliver her at once is imperative," continued the admiral.

"What is the other course, sir?" Captain Clough asked eagerly.

"A very simple one," answered Cochrane coolly. "When I go in and cut out the *Esmeralda*, as I shall surely do, you go in with us and cut out the whaler! Whether Miss McRae's sex has been discovered or not, she will probably be on one ship or the other, in which case one of us will get her."

"I am afraid that four men, unless Lord Cochrane is one of them, are hardly enough for that, sir," said Captain Clough. "Although that is exactly the course we should like to pursue."

"It seems to me," returned the admiral, much pleased at the other's compliment, "that four men such as you have shown yourselves to be are almost equal to anything. But I will grant you that a prize like the *Sharon* will probably be heavily manned, and in short, I shall have to lend you a boat's crew of my own to back you up."

"Very good, sir," said Clough. "But suppose they have sent the young lady ashore, your lordship?"

"In that case, after we cut out the *Esmeralda*, the town will be at my mercy. I will force her surrender to me, or exchange my prisoners for her, under threat of destroying the port."

"You forget the land batteries, sir," observed Captain Crosbie.

"Beggin' your honor's pardon," burst out old Broadrib, "the Spanish batteries ain't planted that would keep his lordship from helpin' that pretty little lady, or any other feemale in distress."

"You see, Crosbie," laughed the admiral, "with men like you and Miller and this old shellback, and our gallant Americans, one can do anything, defy anybody. Not all the batteries in Spanish America will prevent us getting that brave girl."

"God bless your lordship," cried Captain Clough, deeply moved by this sincere and heart-felt decision.

"Of course, you realize that it is my duty to point out to you," continued the admiral, with a gravity and seriousness quite belied by the twinkling of his eyes at the turn of the conversation, "that the proper way to adjust such a difference is to try it out through the Spanish-American admiralty courts and that in taking your ship and incidentally the young lady violently and by force you are in effect, levying war on behalf of the United States against the King of Spain. Doubtless his officers regard Miss McRae as a prisoner of war."

"That for the King of Spain, beggin' your honor's pardon," interposed old Broadrib. "We've levied war on him an' bigger men than him, afore, your honor an' me."

Cochrane laughed.

"This is somewhat different, Broadrib," he said.

"I recognize what you say," said Captain Clough

instantly. "Of course, the legal way would be the proper one in the case of the ship if it were only that, but we should be kept around here for months. We would have to pay all kinds of fees and in the end we might not succeed. But by your lordship's favor, Miss McRae makes all the difference in the world. Prisoner of war or not, I mean to have her, or take such vengeance for her if a hair of her head has been hurt, as Spain will not forget."

"And so do I," cried the admiral, delighted with the other's spirit.

"Besides all which, the King of Spain levied war on us first and we are only taking back our own."

"Good," said the admiral. "That's the spirit."

"May I be permitted to point out to you, sir," began Captain Crosbie rather dryly, "that if we succeed in this rather desperate undertaking your lordship proposes, our Chileans will have all the trouble of cutting out the whaler without any of the prize money which might rightfully be ours."

"Captain Crosbie," said Cochrane sharply, "inasmuch as the misbehavior of the officers and seamen of the Chilean Navy involved this American officer and his men, to say nothing of the little lady in this difficulty, I am of the opinion that the least we can do by way of amends is to help him to get his ship back and to relinquish all claim for prize money of any sort so far as the *Sharon* is concerned."

"You will be pleased to remember," said Captain Clough with much spirit, turning to Captain Crosbie, "that we would never have been in this predicament at

all if it were not for our humanity toward the crew of one of your own ships."

"Quite so," said Cochrane in a manner which settled discussion. "Now I am ready to assist you to the extent of arming you and giving you a cutter or launch with a full crew of good men—and if my Chileans are poor sailors they will fight—and you will be permitted to take part in the cutting out expedition on one condition."

"What is that, sir?"

"That you let me have old Broadrib, whose worth and value I know."

"I know his value, too, sir," said Clough reluctantly. "He's worth more to us than a boat load of ordinary men."

"Doubtless," continued the admiral. "That's why I want him."

"An' beggin' your lordship's pardon," said old Broadrib, "but I promised to stay by Cap'n Clough an' my shipmates here till we got back to New Bedford. An' besides, I want to see the lady safe with her ship in harbor."

"I don't mean to claim you permanently, Broadrib," explained the admiral, "but only for the cutting-out expedition. You see, the brunt of the work will fall upon us who attack the *Esmeralda*, a desperate undertaking, indeed, gentlemen. I have a good crew, but they want leadership, especially in an expedition of this kind. Broadrib here, who has been with me for years under the English flag"—the admiral stopped and bit his lip as he thought of his glorious days under that flag

now forbidden him through no fault of his own—"and he would be of the greatest assistance. You will probably have a hot engagement on the decks of the *Sharon*, but I will give you enough men to make victory certain without my old shipmate."

Captain Clough still hung in the wind.

"Of course, I have to accede to any conditions you lay down, sir, but——"

"Captain Clough," said the admiral impressively, "we are all Englishmen or Americans here. We speak the same language, live under the same laws, however different our governments may be, and we worship the same God in the same way. Would God there had never been any differences between us. I am alone here with the exception of these two gentlemen and two lieutenants, a midshipman and a few petty officers, and seamen, with four hundred Chileans. The little group of Englishmen and Americans have to do everything; that is, in the way of skill or training or leadership. The others will follow bravely enough, splendidly, in fact, but they have to be shown the way. Do you realize what it is to cut out a frigate like the *Esmeralda* from under the guns of the forts of Callao, to say nothing of those of the smaller vessels that are in the harbor? Why, sir, the minute she drops anchor they will cram her with soldiers and they will place her where every gun in the harbor bears on her. They know we want her and they know that with me to want is to have. Ordinarily an admiral wouldn't think of leading a boat party in person, but I intend to do it. You can see what straits we are in. You've got two good men back of

you. I can judge from the look of them. You see how it is, Captain Clough. Will you lend me Broadrib for the night in exchange for a cutter and thirty men and a free hand?"

"Yes, sir," said Clough. "Under the circumstance, I will, although I don't think" — he looked admiringly over at the big British sailor — "that I am letting him go any too cheap."

"I'm glad to be rated so high," said old Broadrib. "I'm sorry not to go with you, Cap'n Clough, but his lordship here needs me, an' in course I obeys his lordship's directions."

"It is understood, is it not, your lordship," asked Clough, "that if we get safely through this undertaking, I am to have Broadrib back for my run home?"

"You are," answered Cochrane. "And I'll try to make up a crew for you to enable you to work your ship back to the States."

"Thank you, sir."

"In a way you will be a help to me because your attack on the *Sharon* will be a diversion."

"And about bringing her out, sir, after we have got her?"

"There you are thrown on your own resources," said the admiral.

"Are you going to bring out the frigate, may I ask?"

"I hope to, but before I do I intend to turn her guns on the other ships in the harbor and the forts and make a big killing of it. Well, it is late. I have no doubt you would like to turn in. Captain Crosbie, will you see that Broadrib is berthed for'ard with the warrant

officers? And enter him on the books as our bo's'n temporarily. The place is vacant, you know. You can take the other two American seamen with you, Broadrib. Captain Clough, there is a spare berth in my cabin you can have. And so, good night. We shall be off Callao in the morning if the wind holds, and then I hope to make it possible for you to get your promised wife and your ship again."

CHAPTER XX

AUDREY MAKES GOOD HER DEFENSE

AUDREY McRAE had not lived the hard life of the sea, doing a boy's full share of work, almost a man's at times, without developing a power and strength far beyond that of the ordinary woman, and that many a bigger boy might have envied. She was terribly angry and excited when she struck the Spanish captain in the face; she was roused to the utmost in defense of her honor; her resentment was overwhelming. Therefore she struck hard and swiftly.

Captain Cueto was caught unexpectedly. He had become careless since his discovery of her sex. It never occurred to him that he had anything to fear from a young woman. He was unsteady anyway from the manhandling of which he had already been the victim in his cabin. He staggered, fell back, caught the edge of the table, and thus barely saved himself from another bad fall. His weakness or unreadiness gave the girl a few precious moments which she put to instant use.

There was but one way to flee. To go out on deck would result in her instant seizure by the crew. She turned aft, and before her tormentor could prevent, she had dashed through the open door of the captain's private cabin, which she slammed hastily behind her. The key was on the inside of the lock and she instantly

turned it. She had not a moment to spare, for the door was scarcely secured before Captain Cueto thrust violently against it. The key bolt was a frail barrier or protection. Another moment and the determined efforts of the Spaniard would have broken in the door.

But Audrey's fears and hesitations were gone. No man could have thought more clearly or acted more quickly and decisively. On the desk in the captain's cabin lay an open case of pistols, charged and ready for use. The girl seized one, pointed it at the door and pulled the trigger.

Fortunately for Captain Cueto he had drawn back from the door for a final rush against it, and the bullet, crashing through the door, whistled by his cheek and buried itself in the forward bulkhead of the cabin. It had its effect, however, for the captain immediately got out of range of any further shots. It gave him an inkling as to the character and spirit of the woman with whom he had presumed to trifle. To do him justice he could not but admire the courage and resolution of the girl, although she had so nearly taken his life. And it made him more determined than ever in his pursuit of her.

Audrey heard him moving about in the main cabin, and inferred, a little thankfully, it must be admitted, for she was a woman after all, that she had not killed, and probably not even wounded, her enemy. Satisfied that she had no assault to fear for the moment, she sought to barricade the door. All the heavy furniture of the cabin was, of course, screwed to deck and bulkheads, but by means of chairs, a locker door which she pried

off its hinges by using the captain's sword, she did manage to secure the door so that at least it could not be burst open without giving her time to defend it.

Then she reloaded the discharged pistol, finding the materials in the desk, and examined its fellow in the case to make sure it was also in working order. Next she closed and locked the port shutters to prevent any entrance into the cabin by anyone dropping down from the deck above. Having thus done all possible for her safety with the means at hand and under the conditions prevailing, she lay down in the berth, intending to rest, but not to sleep.

Fear and excitement kept her awake for some time, but as nothing happened, she finally fell asleep despite her determination. It was broad daylight when she awoke and opened the port shutters for a look out. Her heart jumped when she saw land off to one side and close at hand.

There were forts and batteries along the shore, more forts higher up and inland, while all about were the buildings of a fine and extensive old Spanish town. She had never made the port, but she knew, of course, it must be Callao to which the *Esmeralda* had been heading. There were many ships in the harbor, some of them obviously vessels of war.

The way on the *Esmeralda* was very much checked. She was sailor enough to realize that the frigate was under reduced canvas preparatory to bringing to at her anchorage. She had but little way on, and as she slowly drifted in with the tide, a heavy frigate suddenly came into Audrey's field of vision. From the gaff end of this

fine vessel of war the Stars and Stripes fluttered out bravely in the fresh breeze of the morning blowing into the harbor.

Audrey stared at it with a love and longing she had not thought it possible any sight, unless it were her brave and handsome young lover and protector, could arouse. The flag of the United States on one of the ships of war of the Republic! If she could only get aboard that ship she would be safe from Captain Cueto and the whole power of Spain with South America added. Audrey could swim unusually well. For a moment she thought of dropping overboard through the stern window and trying for the frigate, but a second thought convinced her that long before she could get near enough to hail the American ship she would be overhauled and brought back to the *Esmeralda*. She instinctively realized that the Spanish captain would not be easily balked of his prey, and with a sigh of regret she gave over the half-formed design.

Still the presence of the frigate gave her a deal of comfort. And she took more comfort in the thought that in all probability her lover had reached the *O'Higgins* long since. She knew him well enough to be sure that he would sooner or later effect her rescue. And from what Broadrib had told them all about Admiral Cochrane, she was equally sure that he would gladly do everything in his power to lend Captain Clough efficient aid. She could count on Broadrib and Rice and Storey also. She well knew the spirit and enterprise in that quartette.

Her condition, as she reviewed it while the *Esme-*

ralda slowly drifted in, was by no means hopeless. Her problem was a simple one—to hold Captain Cueto at bay until she was rescued or exchanged, or until she could get word to the American captain of the frigate which the movements of the *Esmeralda* had now caused her to lose sight of.

She felt certain that she had no danger of any assault to apprehend from the captain in the day time. And she knew that now that he had discovered her sex he would not subject her to the threatened public flogging—at least not so long as he had any hope of winning her affections. So her heart was much lighter than it had been. She trusted in God, in Captain Clough, in his three devoted followers, in Admiral Cochrane, in the American ship in the harbor, in her own wit and courage, and in about the order set down.

She was hungry and very thirsty, but she possessed her soul in what patience she could until the crash of the anchor as it was dropped overboard and the stoppage of the ship as the flukes took ground and the cable was finally checked, told her that one stage of her adventurous cruise was over. As the frigate swung to the tide she caught another glimpse of the American man-of-war, far astern, and then of the battered but homely and familiar whaler upon which she had passed through so many adventures and aboard which she had lost her heart. She wished she were back upon the decks of the *Sharon* once more, her hands on the wheel, Captain Clough giving his orders, and the men busied about their sailors' tasks.

She had thought it safe to unbarricade the cabin door,

though she still kept it locked. After the ship came to anchor and had been made snug alow and aloft, she was not surprised to hear a cautious knock on the door and the captain's voice calling her.

"Señorita," he began ingratiatingly in English, of course, "don't fire again. I wish to talk to you. Will you come out?"

"Speak on," answered Audrey. "I can hear you through the door."

She seized a pistol as she spoke, and the Spaniard listening could hear her cocking it.

"You need not fear me, Señorita," he continued quickly.

"I don't," came in swift interruption, but he went on without noticing her interjection.

"I pledge you my word that no harm is intended you, the word of a Spanish officer and gentleman."

Now Audrey knew that the captain was the one, but she felt equal assurance that he was not the other. She temporized, therefore, and questioned him further.

"And after last night, why should I trust your word. Señor?"

"Last night I was mad. Today I am sane. I want nothing to do with a woman who would return bullets for kisses. I only wish to get you out of my ship in return for your promise to say nothing of our — ah — little misadventure, when you are safe among your friends."

Captain Cueto was an excellent actor, especially when it came to deceiving a woman. His words were frank

and satisfactory. He seemed sincere. Still Audrey sought further assurance.

"What do you mean to do with me?" she asked.

"What do you wish me to do?"

"Send me back to the Chilean war ship to Captain Clough."

If Audrey could have seen Captain Cueto's face darken at this, she would have been not a little enlightened as to his trustworthiness.

"That is impossible," he answered quickly.

"Well, then put me aboard that American ship we passed.

"Gladly. Open the door."

"On your honor?"

"On my honor, Señorita; faith of a gentleman of Spain! I shall call away a boat instantly and myself deliver you aboard the American ship."

Taking the precaution to slip one of the pistols into the inside pocket of her jacket, and having pinned her torn shirt together as well as possible, Audrey now unlocked and opened the door. Captain Cueto had schooled his bruised face into an expression of friendliness and he made no effort to molest her at all. On the contrary, with extreme courtesy he pointed to the cabin door and requested her to go out on deck. When Audrey returned by demanding that he go first, he shot an eloquent look of mingled protest and injured innocence at her and murmured as he obeyed:

"Alas, you do not trust me after all, Señorita."

And decidedly "after all" that was true.

However, it appeared that the Spaniard really meant

to play fair. A boat was called away and the girl and the captain took their places in it after it had been brought to the gangway. The big sergeant of marines also went with them, taking his seat in the stern sheets near Audrey by Captain Cueto's direction.

"You are such an exceedingly spirited and dangerous young lady," said the captain, smiling rather ruefully, "as both the sergeant's hand and my face can testify, that it is well to take precautions."

As the cutter rounded the bows of the *Esmeralda*, the *Sharon*, near at hand, and the American frigate, a mile or so beyond, came into view. The captain said something to the coxswain of the cutter in his box aft and then turning to Audrey, explained that he had given him an order to steer for the American ship.

Audrey could scarcely believe in her good fortune. Was she to get out of all her troubles so easily? For the moment she almost felt grateful to the Spanish captain.

CHAPTER XXI

A PROMISE BROKEN TO THE HOPE

IT WAS not until the cutter swerved to starboard and swung in toward the gangway of the *Sharon* that Audrey realized the double dealing of her captor. When she exacted his promise to put her aboard the American ship, she referred to the man-of-war, as he very well knew. Too late the girl realized that while he kept the promise to her ear, he intended to break it to her hope. Constructively the *Sharon* was an American ship, though in possession, whether lawfully or not, of the Spaniards. And it was by this subterfuge he saved his honor!

He sustained as best he could Audrey's outspoken contempt, pointing out to her in a vain effort to mitigate her anger that he was literally keeping his word.

"Señorita," he pleaded, "I can not release you now. But you will be unharmed even if a prisoner on the *Sharon*. I pledge you my word to that——"

"Your word!" interposed Audrey hotly, "and what is it worth?"

"Much. You will be on the American ship, as I promised. I shall keep faith with you. Señorita," he went on in English which was, of course, entirely unintelligible to the boat crew, "I was wrong about you and the Americano. I ask your forgiveness. I prove my

honesty in this. I am in love with you. I am an hidalgo of Spain. I would fain win your heart. You can ask me anything——”

“Set me free, then,” exclaimed the girl passionately.

“Anything but that, Señorita,” replied the captain with equal intensity. “When I know that you leave your heart with me——then you may go, because you will return.”

“Never. American women are not won that way, and every hour of restraint stiffens my resistance and deepens my hatred.”

The Spaniard’s dark face crimsoned at these bitter words. He controlled himself as best he could, however.

“We shall see,” he replied simply, not seeking to controvert her and adding these words whose undoubted truth, while they failed to move her, made her realize the more the desperate case in which she stood. “Remember, I could set you ashore, turn you adrift, give you over to the tender mercies of Callao. And be well assured of this, that in all Peru the only being who stands between you——and——you can guess what, Señorita, is myself.”

The boat being now alongside the whaler in obedience to his order, Audrey scrambled up the battens to the deck, the captain following her. He thus addressed Lieutenant Morelos, who had the deck and was in command of the prize:

“Señor, you will hold this lady——”

“Lady!” exclaimed Morelos in his astonishment at the unexpected revelation.

"The boy is become a woman. We were all fooled. But we shall be no longer. I have sent ashore for dress suited to her sex; when it reaches this ship she will discard these boy's clothes for it."

"Never," exclaimed Audrey, who somehow felt more able to face the world and overcome its dangers in the clothes she wore rather than in the unfamiliar gowns of her sex.

"Lieutenant Morelos, this lady is absolutely in your charge," continued the captain, making no other answer to Audrey's outburst. "She is to have the exclusive use of the captain's cabin. She is to have the freedom of the quarter deck at reasonable hours. You will guard her person carefully, at the same time holding her in the deepest respect. She is—" he paused a moment, "my property."

Audrey stamped her foot upon the deck in futile and indignant protest.

"I shall obey your excellency's orders," answered Morelos, bowing.

"Good. Escort the lady to her cabin and rejoin me here."

Presently, while Audrey reluctantly followed Morelos, and Captain Cueto waited idly on the quarter deck of the whaler, the signal midshipman of the prize crew came aft and, respectfully saluting, informed his captain that the *Esmeralda* had signaled a message to him.

"What is it?"

"You have guests, excellency — ladies."

"Reply that I shall come aboard in a short time and

ask them to be good enough to await me," said Cueto, his face darkening again.

It was apparent that he neither wished for nor rejoiced in the presence of these ladies aboard the *Esmeralda* at that time, whoever they might be. Indeed, there was no uncertainty in his mind as to their identity. Donna Inez Pacheco and her duenna would certainly come to him at the earliest moment, provided he did not go to her. For Captain Cueto was completely involved in an affair with Donna Inez, a wealthy and beautiful young widow of Peru. He had fallen deeply in love with her, and had been true to her in thought and act until Audrey, so bewitchingly different from all the women he had hitherto met, had crossed his course. And so perhaps he would be when he tired of the American girl. Captain Cueto had no intention of giving up the ducats of Donna Inez. Marriage with her must not be abandoned. But he was even more ardently determined not to resist his sudden passion for his fascinating American prisoner. He had a difficult rôle to play; still, with two ships on which to play it, he thought it not an impossible one. And he might have succeeded despite the odds against him but for treachery on his own ship.

Lieutenant Suarez, his first officer, was also in love with Donna Inez. He was bitterly jealous of his superior, rightly fancying but for the other's higher rank and station that he himself might have had a chance. Neither he nor anyone on the *Esmeralda* except the captain was aware of the true sex of the seeming boy. He welcomed Donna Inez and her duenna gladly and

explaining that Captain Cueto had gone to the American prize with his solitary prisoner, a ship's boy, he offered her the hospitality of the Captain's cabin and sought to entertain her and incidentally kindle her admiration by a vivid, highly colored account of their adventurous course, with, of course, himself in the leading rôle.

Meantime, just after the interchange of signals, a shore boat approached the *Sharon* and there was delivered to Captain Cueto a large parcel from the leading dealer in woman's apparel in Callao, which had been assembled and sent off to him in compliance with a message he had sent ashore so soon as the frigate anchored.

Bidding Morelos keep close watch, the captain went aft into the cabin with the parcel. Audrey, who had been sitting on a transom in the outer cabin, rose as he entered. The captain laid the parcel on the table.

"These, Señorita," he began, indicating the parcel whose strings he broke, "are a complete outfit for a young lady of your station whom I honor with my affection. You will put them on at once and wear them hereafter. Should anything be lacking, you have only to mention it to Lieutenant Morelos, who will tell me, and I shall see that you get it."

"I prefer to dress as I am," answered Audrey stubbornly, thrusting away the opened parcel with its rich and brilliant articles of wear.

"I regret to disregard your preference, Señorita, but it is my wish——"

"I won't do it."

"You will immediately obey me or I will detail a boatswain and his mates to — ah — assist you."

There was no mistaking the captain's determination. He would have his way. It pleased him to play the gallant in part. Perhaps he hoped to prevail by such arts in the end. But in the beginning it was necessary that he should let the woman see that if he willed he was master. He knew of no better way.

"You would not submit me to such an indignity," said the girl.

"Would I not?" He drew out his watch. "If in one minute you are not inside the cabin with those clothes, and if in one minute more you do not pass out to me those you are wearing, I will undertake the duties of a lady's maid myself, with the assistance of such men of the crew as may be necessary to subdue you."

This was the real captain speaking, his veneer of courtesy and kindness falling from him. There was no more doubt that he had the will than there was that he had the power. Raging at her impotence, Audrey gave up. She did not wait the expiration of the appointed time. She seized the clothes and fled to the cabin. In a few moments she threw her jacket and trousers through the door. Captain Cueto picked them up, put them in a locker, turned the key, put it in his pocket, laughed triumphantly, and went out on deck. Thence, after repeating his caution to his prize master, he descended to the boat, was rowed to the frigate, and dismissing rather summarily Lieutenant Suarez, who was comporting himself as

if he owned the ship, he took Donna Inez into his arms.

He really loved the hot-blooded, fierce-tempered, jealous-hearted Spanish woman. He was genuinely rejoiced to see her again. His kisses lacked nothing that she could wish. In his ardent protestations she found no flaw. Yet at the same time he was thinking of the inaccessible American girl and wondering how she looked in the bewitching dress of a lady of Spain. He almost wished he had stayed a little longer to see the results of his commands.

Donna Inez stayed to luncheon on the frigate, and then as there was much for Don Baldamero to do in plan and execution for the safety of his ship, he himself took her to shore in his own first cutter, promising to come to her that evening for a longer and happier visit.

Lieutenant Suarez had also asked and received permission to spend a few hours ashore. He had just learned something of importance. Captain Cueto had made one mistake. His conversation with Audrey in the cutter had, it is true, been carried on in English, but he had repeatedly addressed her as "Señorita." The boat's crew heard it, and although there had been no communication between the *Sharon* and the *Esmeralda*, every seaman on the frigate soon knew that Audrey was a woman. And it was not long before the news reached the officers. Without saying anything to the captain the first lieutenant interrogated the coxswain of the cutter, satisfied himself that the tidings were true, asked for a short shore leave, went off in the cutter

with the others, communing with himself as to the proper use to make of the facts to the furtherance of his own interests.

Audrey, dressed in an exquisitely chosen Spanish costume—the captain's taste was unexceptionable and his direction had been minute—came out on deck after her solitary luncheon and caught sight of the captain's boat pulling in toward the landing. She saw that two of the passengers were women and took a little comfort from that fact. She thought surely that if she could only reach a woman with an appeal she would be safe.

She was still on deck when the captain's boat returned. He gallantly saluted her. He would fain have boarded the *Sharon* but he could not then spare the time. There were too many necessary precautions to be taken. The Chilean frigates were still in the offing, slowly beating to and fro across the mouth of the harbor. The risk was too great to warrant any indifference or neglect. He contented himself by hailing her and bidding her prepare to receive him late that very night. He would stop on his return from the city, where he intended to dine.

Audrey shuddered at the warning. Instinctively her hand went to the bosom of her dress where, with infinite difficulty on account of its bulkiness, she had managed to conceal that loaded pistol she had taken from the captain's case and which he had not yet missed. In it was her only earthly hope.

CHAPTER XXII

BOLD PREPARATIONS

AS HAD been foreseen, the *O'Higgins* failed to overtake the *Esmeralda*, which with her unlawful prize, had got safely into the Callao harbor. The *O'Higgins* with the *Independencia* and the *Lautaro*, the other two Chilean war ships, established a strict blockade and for the moment the admiral attempted nothing whatever, although the inaction was killing to Captain Clough. Indeed it did not seem possible that even Cochrane's daring and genius could effect anything with the odds so heavily against him.

The Spanish naval forces in the Pacific had been reduced by capture and shipwreck to three frigates; two of them were small and of no especial importance and they were in harbors farther up the coast. The *Esmeralda*, however, a new forty-four-gun ship, was a formidable vessel and her existence was a constant menace. If she could be captured, the other Spanish ships and gun-boats could be dealt with easily. They would, in fact, become negligible, and the Chilean armies advancing up the coast to effect the liberation of the province of Peru, would be greatly helped in their endeavor.

Indeed, the capture of the *Esmeralda* was vital to the success of the rebellious colonists, and Lord Coch-

rane was determined to take her. All this quite apart from his gallant desire and determination to restore the brave girl to the young American seaman who continued to please his lordship greatly. The Spaniards were as keenly alive to the importance of retaining the *Esmeralda* as their enemies were for taking her. Although no one could see how even the most foolhardy seaman would make any attempt to cut her out under the conditions prevailing, yet they neglected no precaution whatever.

Captain Cueto, in the intervals left him between his various and pressing love affairs, showed not a little enterprise and skill. First of all he reinforced his crew by a large contingent of soldiers from the shore. Next he moored his ship with springs on her cables so that she could be swung in any way and her heavy batteries commanded the harbor. Callao, as the last good Spanish port in South America, was heavily fortified. No less than three hundred guns were mounted in forts and batteries, many of which commanded and protected not only the approaches, but the frigate herself. There were thirty small gun-boats in the harbor, each one of which was so placed as to afford additional protection to the *Esmeralda*. There were a few minor war vessels in the port as well, and they too were manned and armed. A heavy prize crew was placed on the *Sharon*, whose name had been painted out and whose nationality was carefully disguised from the foreign ships of war. The American frigate, for instance, had not the least suspicion of the whaler, for her wrecked condition and jury rig made it impossible to identify her without a closer

inspection than the Americans had opportunity to make.

In addition to these obvious arrangements, a great boom of logs chained together and which had been previously prepared for such an emergency was thrown across the channel in front of the *Esmeralda* to prevent possible boat attacks. Of course there was an opening in the boom, to permit the passage of friendly craft, but in that opening a Spanish guard-boat with a heavy crew was stationed, and it too could be closed in an emergency. Including the garrison of the forts, the crews of the ships and gun-boats, there were probably ten thousand men under arms in Callao.

Poor Audrey in her unwonted Spanish dress surveyed these busy preparations with a sinking heart. They seemed to render it so unlikely as to be impossible that her lover would ever rescue her. She could see the Chilean squadron cruising to and fro in blockade across the entrance to the harbor. She was certain that Captain Clough was aboard the *O'Higgins*. She knew that he would never give over the endeavor to rescue her. She realized the value to the Chileans of the *Esmeralda*, the absolute necessity of her capture. She could estimate Lord Cochrane's character and enterprise from what Broadrib had told them all in those pleasant and unforgettable hours on the *Sharon*, on which she was now a lonely prisoner. But the odds were too heavy. With the best will and the most eager desire in the world, both love and courage and high endeavor could not compass such success.

She thought she would surely have to depend upon

her own exertions to get aboard the trim built, smart looking American frigate, and hence to her lover's arms again. But though she made many plans none of them was possible of execution in view of the strict watch that was kept over her, though she did have the freedom of the deck and was unmolested, save for Captain Cueto's visits, in the cabin. She did not realize that a helper who was neither her lover, nor the American frigate, but a woman, was close at hand.

To attack such a force as Audrey noted with dismay was available for the defense of the *Esmeralda*, Admiral Cochrane had three ships, all of them leaky and more or less unseaworthy, and, although the *O'Higgins* had been built for a man-of-war and was rated as a fifty-gun frigate, she would have been no match in her present condition, had the men commanding the respective ships been equal, for the new *Esmeralda* alone.

The *Independencia* and the *Lautaro* were converted merchant ships, lightly built, small in size and of necessity lightly armed. There were not seven hundred and fifty men all told under the admiral's command. General San Martin, who was invading Peru, was still far away and could render no assistance whatever.

The precautions they took showed the healthy respect the Spaniards had for him they called *El Diabolo*. For no one but a man of incarnate courage, consummate daring and genius would have thought for a moment of cutting out the frigate so protected. Captain Clough would have attempted it, but then he had more powerful motives even than the admiral. And after all, aside from the frantic lover, Admiral Cochrane

was the one man who had the desperation to conceive such an undertaking, and the boldness to attempt to carry it out. Under a flag of truce he had sent in challenges to the Spanish commander to come out and fight him ship for ship, to which no attention whatsoever had been paid. At the same time he had demanded the return of the boy, Rey McRae, unlawfully detained; and as before the Spaniard did not even deign to answer.

With the Admiral's permission, Captain Clough had also taken advantage of the flag to send in word on his own account. He did not challenge Captain Cueto to any bodily encounter. He simply wrote him in terse blunt words that if anything happened to the boy Rey, he, Captain Clough, would kill him, Captain Cueto, if he had to follow him to Spain to do it. And when Broadrib and Rice and Storey learned what their young commander had written they asked the privilege of signing the letter on their own account, which was promptly accorded them. Broadrib indeed wanted to make the threat stronger.

Captain Clough also wrote a note to Audrey, relating what he had said to the Spaniard, and bidding her keep up her courage. He wrote as if to a boy, on the chance and because of the hope that it had not been discovered that she was a woman. And for that same reason the admiral had done the same thing.

Captain Cueto laughed contemptuously as he tore up both notes and threw them into the sea. Of course he did not deliver her letter to Audrey, and did not even mention that he had received it when next he saw her to prosecute his odious wooing.

Don Baldamero had, he thought, sufficiently demonstrated his own courage in that bloodless battle out of range a few nights before and he did not purpose to risk his ship any closer to the *O'Higgins* and her doughty commander than he had to. As for the impotent American, he felt so secure he could snap his fingers at him and his preposterous threat. His trouble came from another quarter. He could not make up his mind what to do with Donna Inez.

Admiral Cochrane had not expected that his challenge would be accepted, so he went on quietly making his preparations, and comforting the American with assurances of ultimate success. To capture the *Esmeralda* seemed an impossibility to the Chilean officers of the squadron, and even the English officers—everybody except the three Americans and old Broadrib, in fact—regarded the attempt as so hazardous as to be absurd. One or two of them actually ventured to point out the dangers and even the impossibility to the admiral, but no one tried that a second time. As Cochrane said, he had been accustomed to achieve the impossible. And a man who had with a single frigate attacked a dozen French ships-of-the-line was not to be halted by all the Spaniards in South America. Captain Clough felt exactly the same way. He was a man after Cochrane's heart and the admiral even sounded him as to the possibility of his entering the Chilean service under him—a suggestion firmly but courteously rejected by Clough.

Failing to entice the *Esmeralda* to come out and engage him, Cochrane decided that he would cut her out

at her moorings. This could only be done by a boat expedition. It would have to be done at night. Such was the confidence of the Chilean sailors and under officers in their great commander that when he called for volunteers to man the boats on this preposterous adventure, practically the entire crews of the three ships offered themselves. His lordship was thus enabled to pick and choose, and he selected with great care two hundred and forty of the best men, which he purposed to transport in fourteen boats. There was an additional boat in the expedition, a launch capable of carrying thirty or more men. This he gave to Captain Clough according to his promise.

He appointed the night of November 5, 1820, for the attempt. He gave to Guise, the captain of one of the auxiliaries, the command of one of the divisions of the boats, and to Crosbie, his flag-captain and the commander of the *O'Higgins*, the other division. Guise had seven boats, Crosbie six. Admiral Cochrane, with the remaining boat, decided to lead. It was no place for an admiral, of course, hardly a place for a captain. Such expeditions were usually carried out by first lieutenants, but Cochrane loved to fight. Nothing on earth would have kept him out of it, and he rightly judged that his presence was worth a division.

Guise had been mutinous and rebellious, Crosbie was not too well affected toward the admiral, of whom they were more or less all jealous, for, having been in the service of Chile before Cochrane came, they resented his appointment to command them; and his lordship was certain that if he wanted the thing well done he would

have to oversee it himself. Besides, as was said, he entered into the spirit of the amazing adventure with almost boyish zest and joy.

The first boat of Crosbie's division which was to follow the admiral was under the command of old Broadrib. Following the last boat of Guise's division was the launch commanded by Captain Clough with Rice and Storey and about thirty Chileans. Every man was armed with cutlass and pistol. They were, by Cochrane's orders, all dressed in white with a broad blue band around the left arm. The whole affair would have to be carried on in the darkness and this would be a means of distinguishing friend from foe. Cochrane himself was dressed just like the rest.

In order further to deceive the Spaniards, Captain Forster was ordered to take the *Independencia* and the *Lautaro* out of sight on the day appointed for the onfall. And early in the afternoon these two ships clapped on a lot of canvas and bore away westward before a fresh breeze as if in pursuit of a sail, leaving the *O'Higgins* slowly beating to and fro across the entrance.

The night before all the preparations had been made, boats had been assembled and the cutting out party had been placed on the *O'Higgins*. To cut out the *Esmeralda* would be a most astounding feat of arms, but Admiral Cochrane's far-reaching and audacious plans did not stop there. He had given orders that on no account were the cables of the ship to be cut. After she had been mastered by the Chileans her batteries were to be scaled and she was to open fire upon the

gun-boats and other Spanish ships of war and merchant vessels and on the town. The boarders had been carefully instructed as to which guns they were to man and if they were successful in taking the ship they all knew exactly where they were to go and what they were to do. For one thing, the admiral wished to give the *Sharon* a chance to get out of the harbor, for he never doubted but that Captain Clough would recapture her, any more than he doubted his own success. Indeed, he had become as much interested in the recapture and rescue of the woman as in any other success he might achieve. All men in the cutting out party had been cautioned over and over again to look out for a boy, or a woman, on one or the other of the two ships to be assaulted.

Not content with the seizure of the *Esmeralda*, and the escape of the *Sharon*, Cochrane wanted to make a clean sweep of the harbor. There was another ship at Callao, a Spanish packet which had recently arrived from Mexico, which was reputed to contain one million and a half dollars, which would make a prize decidedly worth capturing. Among the other vessels in the harbor were two frigates; one, as has been noted, flying the colors of the United States, and the other those of England. The *Macedonian*, so named in honor of the frigate captured from England by Decatur in the war of 1812, was in the command of Captain John Downes, who had been Commodore Porter's first lieutenant on the famous *Essex* cruise. The English frigate was called the *Hyperion* and was commanded by Captain Basil Hall. The English officers, who belonged to the

political party which had persecuted Lord Cochrane and forced him out of England's service, were friendly to the Spaniards and antagonistic to the Chileans.

The sympathies of the American captain, on the contrary, although he had fought with England and did not naturally love the English, were with the Chileans, who were striving to establish a republic and escape from the domination of the King of Spain, and consequently he favored Cochrane also.

The lieutenant commanding the boat party which carried in Admiral Cochrane's challenge and Captain Clough's letters under the flag of truce and who had incidentally keenly noted all the defensive preparations of the Spaniards which he had reported to the admiral, had met with scant courtesy as he passed close by the *Hyperion*. The Americans, on the contrary, had spoken with the lieutenant when he pulled around on the side which screened him from the observation of the Spaniards and the Chilean officer had learned that arrangements had been made with the Spanish admiral in case a night engagement became necessary, for the foreign war ships to hoist three lights in a triangle, one at the main royal masthead, the other at the extremities of the main royal yardarms, so that the Spaniards would not fire upon them in the darkness. This was a very valuable piece of information which Lord Cochrane treasured and of which he made good use subsequently.

The lieutenant had also learned the name of the American frigate and the name of her commander. When he came back the admiral had immediately summoned Captain Clough to his cabin.

"Captain Clough," began the admiral, "I have just learned that one of the foreign war ships in the harbor is an American. The frigate *Macedonian*, so named, I believe, because of a victory your Commodore Decatur won over us in the little unpleasantness not long ago," continued the admiral, making a wry face. "I thought possibly you might know him and——"

"Know him!" exclaimed Clough. "Why, I served under him as midshipman when——when——"

"Ah, when your frigate *Essex* was captured by our *Phoebe*, commanded by my own good friend Hillyar?"

"Yes, sir," said Clough. "Although, of course, you got us at a disadvantage and you had the *Cherub* with you and——"

"We won't go into that," said his lordship, who knew quite well the truth of the affair, but did not care to talk about it, and as Captain Clough's chances for regaining his ship depended on the continued kindness of the Earl of Dundonald, the American did not attempt to pursue the conversation further. "What I wanted to point out to you, sir," continued the admiral, "was that possibly you might care to refer your case to Captain Downes who would, I am sure, be glad to make proper representations and secure the release of the lady and perhaps of your ship——"

"I am quite certain, your lordship," interrupted Captain Clough, "that Captain Downes would do anything that any seaman could do in behalf of the lady and in behalf of the *Sharon*, but there is no war between Spain and the United States and the matter would have to be handled by our state department. It would be a matter

of diplomacy. It would take a long time and I believe your lordship's plan is the simplest way."

"Captain Clough," said his lordship, his eyes gleaming, "you are a man after my own heart. I have had enough difficulties with law and lawyers to make me hate the thought of them. We men of the sword have a shorter and quicker and better way of settling our differences. You have answered me as a man of spirit. By heaven, sir, as I should expect a man trained in the American Navy to do. You've a small navy, but as an Englishman of the same old stock, I am proud of you. What further preferment there may be for you in your profession I do not know, and these Chileans are broken reeds to lean upon. I have got nothing out of them, but——"

"Glory, your lordship," suggested Captain Clough.

"Oh, yes," said Cochrane, easily. "I had plenty of that before, but they shall settle with me some day, and if you ever want a friend, if you ever want a position, if you ever want a commission, I desire you to call on me. Oh, I know you are a rabid patriot and I honor you for it, sir, but you never know what might happen. I never thought to take service under an alien flag," went on the admiral, with a tinge of bitterness, "and so my offer stands. After we have cut out the *Esméralda* and brought out the *Sharon* you can explain matters to Captain Downes. I have no doubt there will be ample opportunity."

"I should be delighted to do so, sir, and I shall feel in duty bound to point out to him that your lordship indicated the proper course to be pursued," said Cap-

tain Clough, smiling, "but on my own responsibility I chose the simplest way."

"Quite so," said Cochrane, smiling in turn and bowing to indicate that the interview was over.

Late in the afternoon, the admiral caused the following proclamation to be read to the crew and volunteers:

Marines and seamen—This night we shall give the enemy a mortal blow. Tomorrow you will present yourself proudly before Callao, and all your comrades will envy your good fortune. One hour of courage and resolution is all that is required for you to triumph. Remember that you have conquered in Valdivia, and have no fear of those who have hitherto fled from you. The value of all the vessels captured in Callao will be yours, and the same reward will be distributed amongst you as has been offered by the Spaniards in Lima to those who should capture any of the Chilean squadron. The moment of glory is approaching. I hope that the Chileans will fight as they have been accustomed to do, and that the English—and the Americans—will act as they have ever done at home and abroad. Remember to look for the American lady and protect her at all hazards. We do not war on women.

The crew was mustered in the waist and in the gangways, the officers with the Americans on the quarter deck, while the proclamation was read.

"It sounds a little bit like Captain Cueto's speech, sir," whispered Rice to Captain Clough.

"Yes," said Clough, "but this man means business.

Besides, you must remember," he continued, "that he is in command of a Chilean ship and these people expect just that sort of thing."

That they did expect it and that they welcomed it was evident by the wild burst of cheering that followed the reading of the proclamation. Although it was read in Spanish the Americans were now sufficiently familiar with that language to understand every word of it.

It also hugely delighted old Broadrib, who as acting boatswain stood to the fore of the crew with his new mates around him. The old man, of course, had been relegated to his proper position on the ship which was that of a warrant officer, as chief among seamen, but he and Captain Clough and the other Americans had enjoyed plenty of opportunities to talk things over.

After the muster was over and the watch was set they again had a chance for a few brief moments of conversation.

"Well, sir," began the old harpooner, to his young superior, "what did I tell you?"

"What did you tell us, Broadrib?" asked the American officer.

"Why, if you once fell in with Admiral Cochrane we'd git our ship back an' the little lady, an' everythin' would go right."

"Yes, you did say that."

"An' didn't I tell you he was a downright fighter, a reg'lar fire eater?"

"You certainly did. No one but a man of his stamp would think of undertaking such an enterprise as cut-

ting out that ship. Look at her. Why, it's foolhardy in the extreme."

"That's jest it. Lord Cochrane has allus succeeded in doin' the thing that everybody thought was impossible an' nobody drempt' it could be done."

"Do you think it can be done?"

"Think? I never thinks when his lordship's around," said the old man, "but if you axes my belief, I knows we'll succeed. Tomorrer mornin', if his lordship's plan is carried out, that harbor will look as if it had been visited by a hurricane. You an' Miss Audrey will be surveyin' it from the decks of the *Sharon* an' we'll be lookin' at it from what's left of the *Esmeralda*. That Spanish cap'n is goin' to see a real battle tonight at close enough range for him to do more than smell the smoke an' hear the guns. Trust me."

"Are you going in his lordship's boat, Broadrib?" asked Storey.

"No sech luck, but I'm in the boat right next to his'n an' it won't be long afore I'm by his side. I told him he needed a few steady goin' men like me to pertect him in case he got too rash an' wenturesome. I even pree-soomed to remind him that he weren't no young leftenant no more, but an admiral."

"What did he say?" asked Rice.

"He only laughed and said if I could git ahead of him in boardin' that ship I was welcome to do it."

"Are you going to try it?"

"In course, I'll try it, but there's no more chance of gittin' ahead of him than there is of a grampus out-swimmin' a dolphin. Well, sir, here's good luck to us

all, Cap'n Clough, we for the frigate, you for the whaler, an' all of us for the little lady. If we're lucky, as we must be, you'll see me on board agin an' then it'll be square away for New Bedford an' a weddin' party. But I warns you jest the minute I gits back an' stretches my legs ashore I'm goin' to head for Lord Cochrane again. He says he wants me an' I preesoom he does."

CHAPTER XXIII

LOVE OF MAN AND LOVE OF WOMAN

CAPTAIN DON BALDAMERO CUETO had dined well, and wine moderately. He had enjoyed a most satisfactory evening with Donna Inez at her charming villa. And it was with extreme reluctance that he tore himself away from her at the comparatively late hour—for the place and period—of half after ten. Indeed he had protracted his visit beyond the sanction of the proprieties, finding Donna Inez, who was in a melting mood indeed, more fascinating than he had supposed she would prove with his mind so full of his young American captive.

Yet as he left the door of the stately house upon the hill his mind reverted to Audrey with a new and different emotion. He would finish a delightful evening by paying her a visit later. He meant to be happy with both the objects of his affection. He was in high fettle, counting his success in either field in alternation a tribute to his finesse and not in the least incompatible with the fine feelings of a man of honor. In that Spaniard's code honor had no function when one dealt with women. Although he loved and intended to marry Donna Inez, that did not in the least restrain him in his projected amour with the fascinatingly different American girl.

Americans had no honor anyway. Their men were

pigs, their women were designed to give pleasure for an hour, to be enjoyed, used and cast aside. He had been too forbearing with the girl. The idea of winning her was an absurd one. Why should he wait or hesitate? The wine he had taken had somewhat obscured his judgment and altered his good intentions. With many protestations of his despair at leaving Donna Inez he went languishingly away, until out of her sight. Then he bore himself as jauntily as his condition permitted.

Fortunately an officer of the Governor's Guard chanced upon him. Captain Cueto reflecting that it was still early and that the night, like art, was long, allowed himself to be prevailed upon to accept an invitation to a little play with a few choice spirits in a room in the palace.

There he met his first officer, Lieutenant Suarez. This gentleman had drunk but little, refusing to join his brother officers of the sister service in their deep potations, and although he was passionately fond of gaming he had refused to play. He had other ends to serve.

Greetings being exchanged between the two seamen, Suarez, who had been waiting this opportunity and indeed had cunningly contrived to get his captain brought thither, excused himself on the plea of an unbreakable engagement with a lady. After the suggestive mocking with which this announcement was greeted, Captain Cueto directed his junior to meet him at the boat landing, where the *Esmeralda's* cutter lay, at half after eleven, when they would go aboard the ship together.

Lieutenant Suarez presently found himself under

Donna Inez' chamber window, which opened upon a spacious patio to which he gained access by a heavy bribe to the major-domo, to whom he was indeed well known as a frequent visitor of the house. He had made the arrangements for his admittance secretly earlier in the afternoon.

It was this same confidential servant, Jose by name, who took a little note up to the gallery and after knocking at Donna Inez' door, thrust it across the sill and fled. Donna Inez had not yet retired. Her mind was filled with happy dreams of her lover. Captain Cueto was in the prime of life, a handsome man, of rank and station, with a fine figure. She, the widow of a rich merchant of Peru, was choosing wisely and well. It had been as easy as it had been fitting for her to fall in love with the captain. And with every reason to urge her on she had developed a passion for him that completely took possession of her.

From these pleasant imaginations about her future she was aroused by the knock upon the door. She turned and caught sight of the letter on the floor. To pick it up, to open it, to bring it to the candles, to read it, was the task of moments only. This is what she saw:—

One who loves Donna Inez as devotedly as hopelessly, and who would not see her deceived, would fain do her a service. If she will come into the patio she will hear that which she should know and which, if she do not learn it, may break her heart. Fear nothing. Trust the writer, who can only sign himself her

Devoted Slave.

Donna Inez was no longer an inexperienced girl. Her courage had been always high. She was dowered with all a woman's curiosity. She had been bred in the atmosphere of intrigue. To decide upon her course was the work of another moment. She resumed her mantilla which she had put off, and taking the letter in her hand, went out upon the gallery instantly and at once descended to the garden. She crossed it to where she noticed two figures standing by the fountain in the center of the patio. One of them she recognized at once as Jose, her major-domo. The other man was cloaked and had his hat drawn down over his face. Donna Inez bade Jose step back out of hearing but remain within call, and then questioned the stranger.

"Are you the author of this note, Señor?"

Lieutenant Suarez bowed profoundly.

"Who are you? What is your name?" continued the woman.

For answer Suarez dropped his cloak, took off his hat, again bowed low before her and stepped nearer to her where the rays from a solitary candle lantern which faintly illuminated the patio and garden fell full upon his face.

"Lieutenant Suarez!" exclaimed the lady. "Do you come, then, from Don Baldamero?"

"Alas, lady," answered the other, with well simulated melancholy, "rather to warn you against Captain Cueto!"

"I will not hear——" began Donna Inez indignantly — "What is it you would say?" she concluded, suspicion and curiosity getting the better of her.

"That American on the prize——"

"You mean the boy?"

"Alas, Señora, that boy is——"

"Not, not a woman?" flashed out Donna Inez, divining the meaning of the officer's significant pause.

Suarez bowed again.

"It is not true," exclaimed the woman. "I will not believe it. Don Baldamero was here a few moments since. He left me with——with——"

"The lady is now on the *Sharon*, a visit to that vessel tomorrow morning will convince you."

"Why not tonight?"

"It might be inconvenient. Captain Cueto goes there tonight."

"And he is your captain, you are betraying!" exclaimed Donna Inez, changing her speech. "Señor, I cannot believe you."

"There is something above loyalty to a man, Señora," urged Suarez.

"And what is that?"

"Love for a woman," burst out the young officer. "Donna Inez," he continued, throwing himself on his knees before her. "I love you passionately. I can not see you sacrificed to him who uses you for his purposes while he is madly enamored of this American. Give me the right to protect you. And I shall——"

"And is she very beautiful, this American girl?"

"She is nothing beside you, beautiful lady. No one could see her in your presence but a mad man, but Don Baldamero——"

"Enough, Señor. You have warned me and al-

though I can not believe I shall take steps. Now leave me."

"May I not hope, Donna Inez, that you——"

"If you have told me the truth, Señor, I shall—but I can promise nothing. Rise, Sir, and be gone. Good night."

Donna Inez could scarcely wait until Jose, whom she summoned by a gesture, had ushered Lieutenant Suarez from the house, to make her plans to combat this reported dereliction on the part of her lover, which she contemplated with an ever-growing jealousy and fury. If, indeed, the boy were a woman, that fact would alone establish Don Baldamero's unfaithfulness! What had he to do with other women, anyway?

Lieutenant Suarez left Donna Inez very unwillingly, yet he thought over the interview with much satisfaction as he lighted his cigarette, stopped at the inn for a bottle of wine, in which he now felt it safe to indulge while he waited for the hour appointed him to join the captain at the landing.

Old Jose having locked the outer door found Donna Inez, shrouded in a long cloak, awaiting him in the garden.

"Jose," she began, "you were in your youth a boatman. You have not forgotten how to handle the oars?"

"I have not, my lady."

"Can you lay your hands upon a boat?"

"In the morning I——"

"Now. At once."

"It can be done, with money, my lady."

"I thought of that; here is my purse. Come, let us hasten."

"Señora," exclaimed the man in amazement. "You can not mean to take a boat, now, at this hour of the night."

"The night is still. I trust to your skill. There is no danger. Or if there be I fear it not. Let us go."

"But where, my lady?"

"To a ship in the harbor, the American ship taken by the *Esmeralda*."

"To the *Sharon*?" questioned Jose, who had rejoiced with all the rest of Callao in the capture and who had ascertained the name of the ship during the day.

"Exactly. I have pressing need to go aboard her at once."

"But not in the night, my lady, surely tomorrow morning——"

"Enough," exclaimed Donna Inez, imperiously. "Tonight. Not another word. Open the door at once. Lead on."

Half an hour later a shore boat, rowed by old Jose, who had apparently forgotten none of his skill and lost little of his strength, approached the *Sharon*. By direction of the muffled woman who sat in the stern sheets of the boat Jose approached the whaler at the stern. Donna Inez knew not a little about ships. Her first husband had owned several. She had made a voyage or two, and her approaching marriage to Captain Cueto, Don Baldamero as she called him, had tended to revive her interest in things nautical. She knew that Jacob's ladders usually hung from the sterns of ships in the

harbor, and as she wished to board the *Sharon* if possible without observation she was resolved to attempt to reach the cabin that way. She knew of course that the American woman, if indeed Lieutenant Suarez had told the truth, would be quartered there.

As the boat rapidly approached the big ship Donna Inez told her plans to Jose, completely disregarding his remonstrances. He caught the Jacob's ladder, held it steady while Donna Inez gathered her rather short skirts about her and, leaving her cloak in the boat, climbed up with no little difficulty until she could look within the cabin. She saw in the private cabin nearest her a woman in a costume which for richness and beauty more than matched her own. The woman's back was turned to her. She could not see her face. But what she could see of her figure, the golden crown of short hair that curled beautifully about her slender neck, carried the conviction of youth and grace and beauty to the older woman's heart. She swung on the Jacob's ladder, resisting an overpowering impulse to faint and fall.

Then the woman within walked out of the private cabin through the door opening into the main cabin and passed out of view of Donna Inez. She had not yet caught a glimpse of her rival's face. The Spanish woman waited a few moments and then drew herself up, put her knee on the port sill and entered the cabin.

According to her orders, old Jose drew the boat forward, concealed it under the mizzen chains, belayed the painter, drew the discarded cloak about him and lay down in the stern sheets, thinking to keep awake; but

he was soon lulled into sound sleep by the gentle movement of the boat in the small waves cast up by the soft breeze of the balmy summer night.

And if old Jose had not slept, which was not according to orders, what did happen might not have happened after all.

Audrey did not dare turn in that night. The captain's promise to pay her a late visit drove all desire to sleep from her. She was deathly afraid of him. His suggestive promise had been full of menace. She wandered restlessly about the cabin for a long time, wondering what she would better do, what indeed she could do. And finally came to only one conclusion. She could make a better fight for her life and honor—for the two were inextricably bound together, without the latter the former were unthinkable—as a boy than as a woman.

Captain Cueto had hidden away, she knew not where, the suit she had been wearing when she had gone aboard the *Esmeralda*, and her other good clothing of the same sort had been taken aboard the Spanish frigate in her sea chest with her other belongings. But she had discovered an old worn-out suit in a locker which no one had thought of sufficient value to appropriate. She would put that on, then with the captain's pistol, her most precious possession, and her sailor's sheath knife, which she found hanging by its laniard from a hook in her former cabin, she would make a last fight for herself and for the happiness of her lover, which was so absolutely dependent upon her fortune.

She left the door of her cabin slightly ajar as she

changed her dress, and she did not notice Donna Inez, who had ventured out of the cabin on the opposite side and from a safe concealment behind the door watched the process.

Donna Inez saw enough. The supposed boy was a woman without doubt, and some might think her beautiful. Donna Inez drew from her great coil of hair as black as her rival's was light a pointed Spanish stiletto. She clenched it in her hands and hesitated whether to rush into the cabin and strike the woman, or to wait until Don Baldamero came aboard and then confront them both.

CHAPTER XXIV

NO CAUSE FOR COMPLACENCY

DON BENITO BALDAMERO PASCUAL DE LOS SANTOS FUENTE-Y-CUETO, to give him his full name, was highly satisfied, even delighted, with his good fortune as he broke away from the gaming table upon the plea of urgent duty and strolled through the streets of the sleeping town toward the landing. And the causes for his pleasure were easily enumerated. He ran over them rapidly in his mind:

First, his love affair with Donna Inez was progressing satisfactorily. Whenever he would he could make the richest widow in Peru—and that was saying a good deal—his wife. Second, he had just returned from a successful cruise with a rich prize. He would know how to report that fruitless encounter with the Chilean squadron so as to secure promotion and corresponding glory. He was already a hero in his own eyes and that is the first step to becoming a hero in everybody's eyes—or the reverse! Third, a girl as different from the Spanish beauty to which he was accustomed was in his complete possession, to have for the taking.

Fourth, the precautions he had taken to guard the ships, and to keep the two women apart, had been so cunningly devised that no possibility of failure could be discovered. Fifth, and lastly, his pocket was un-

usually full of coin, for he had been remarkably and unwontedly fortunate in his play that night.

Certainly fortune smiled upon him. Arrived at the wharf, he found Suarez awaiting him and the boat with its crew at the oars at the foot of the landing stairs leading down to the water's edge. His greeting of his first lieutenant was cheery and cordial to an unusual degree. The joy he took in his rosy reflections, no less than the good wine of which he had partaken without stint, and the effect of which was now quite apparent, had mellowed and softened him to a degree.

As the two officers embarked, the worthy captain could not refrain from enlarging upon the smiling aspect of fortune. Lieutenant Suarez corroborated every statement or claim made by his commander, and fervently congratulated him, laughing in his sleeve the while as he thought complacently of the catastrophe which should destroy some of the captain's hopes and which would not be long deferred. Lieutenant Suarez knew the jealous temper of the Spanish women in general and of Donna Inez in particular. He was certain that the explosion, to cause which he had deftly laid the train, would certainly take place in the morning, and it would not surprise him to have it occur that very night. There was no accounting for the actions of a jealous woman. She might even then be on the *Sharon* they were rapidly approaching. He had dropped a hint in Donna Inez' ear that Captain Cueto intended to visit that ship that very night. It would not be impossible for Donna Inez to be beforehand if she were so minded. At any rate, that night or tomorrow morning

the trouble would begin, and Lieutenant Suarez promised himself much pleasure and not a little ultimate profit from the outcome of the affair. His complacency therefore was quite as great as, if less in evidence than, his captain's as the boat was brought deftly alongside the gangway of the whaler.

Captain Cueto, directing his junior to repair at once to the *Esmeralda* and see that a sharp lookout was kept in addition to all the other precautions for her safety, climbed up the battens as nimbly as a younger lover coming to visit his adored one, and disappeared through the gangway. Lieutenant Suarez, fairly chuckling in his satisfaction, was rowed to the *Esmeralda*, which he reached about a quarter of an hour before midnight. He repeated the captain's warning to the officer of the watch, rather perfunctorily, it must be admitted; went below and turned in to dream of the explosion of the morning without the slightest anticipation of a greater mischance nearer at hand, the results of which he would not be able to enjoy. An alien and disturbing factor to bring to naught all his carefully devised plans was now close by. And neither captain nor lieutenant were to luxuriate long in that hoped-for good fortune.

As Audrey came out of her berth into the main cabin, Donna Inez swiftly and noiselessly concealed herself in the room she had first entered, the captain's private cabin. The Spanish woman surveyed the restless movements of the girl, now for all the world a gallant boy, with increasing interest and with no little sinking of the heart. Audrey was so much younger than she, so different; she was so amazingly attractive even in the

loose-fitting garments of a young sailor lad that Donna Inez could easily understand her fascination for a man of her lover's type.

Studying her with the keen scrutiny of a jealous woman, Donna Inez took some comfort from Audrey's actions, which were not at all those of a woman expecting a lover. On the contrary, if Donna Inez ever saw fear and dread and deadly anxiety evidenced by a woman's look and bearing, she saw it then. Furthermore, the fact that her lighter rival had put on the clothes of a boy was further evidence that she neither desired nor intended to play the receptive woman to the captain's wooing.

There was something so strange and inexplicable about it all that Donna Inez finally decided it would be best to wait a little before discovering herself. She had scarcely come to this decision when a well-known voice, easily heard and recognized in the stillness of the night, without the cabin broke in upon her passionate thoughts and half-formed purposes. It was he, she thought—Don Baldamero! Lieutenant Suarez had told her the truth, then. The blood rushed to her heart. She closed her eyes and clenched her dagger. Now she would learn all. Was he unfaithful to her? Did he amuse himself with her while he paid court to this white-faced boy—girl—woman?

A fury indeed was Donna Inez behind the door, peering through into the great cabin—waiting. She clasped her dagger tighter and strove more desperately than ever to control herself that she might see and hear before she acted. Danger, swift, imminent, and ter-

rible was menacing Captain Cueto, and from more sources than one, that night.

Audrey, quite unconscious that she was not alone in the cabin, heard him also. A spasm of freezing terror that almost stopped her heart was succeeded by a rush of resolution. Her breast throbbed against barrel and butt of the small pistol pressed against her heart by the clothes she wore. Before that virginal shrine should be profaned she would kill Captain Cueto if she were torn to pieces by his men the moment after. She would play the game to the end like a man and not like a woman. She was fighting for all a woman could hold dear, including her right to give herself unspotted from the world to the man she loved. And in her way perhaps she was a deadlier foe even than Donna Inez, or Admiral Cochrane, or the Chileans, or Captain Clough, to the unconscious Spaniard so debonairly exchanging the greetings of the night with Morelos, who again had the watch on deck without the cabin.

Though their thoughts ran like lightning through the minds of the waiting women, the crisis was not delayed. They heard his hand on the door. The next moment it opened. He entered and closed it behind him.

He was not an unattractive picture in the rich naval uniform of his high rank. His face was flushed, his eyes bright, his voice and footsteps unsteady. But to Audrey, who knew him as Donna Inez could not, since the girl saw him with clear vision while the woman was blinded by her affection, his rather handsome face looked devilish, satyric.

He smiled as he caught sight of her in the well-lighted cabin and then his countenance altered as he noticed her changed dress.

"You have disobeyed me," he began severely. "I like not this boy's dress."

"It was as a boy that you saw me first and to you I shall remain a boy always," she replied.

"You mean?"

"I shall not be a woman to you."

"We shall see," he went on. "You are here alone on a ship that was yours but is now mine. You are in my power. I shall see that you do not avoid me as before. No one will enter here no matter what you do. Will you accept the inevitable and me, or shall I use force?"

"Have you no woman of your own land the thought of whom might make you respect me?" asked Audrey, who was standing against the bulkhead just as far from the captain as the size of the cabin permitted.

And the woman concealed within the berth listened for the answer, hung upon it as she had never thought to wait the sound of human voice in her life.

"Plenty of women of my own race, of course. I shall marry one of them presently, but before I do so, I——"

He stepped toward her as he spoke. She noticed the unsteadiness of his gait. She smelled the fumes of wine. Perhaps she could measure strength with him. If she could avoid killing him, she would be glad. She was woman enough still to shrink from that save as a last resort. She forced the fighting. She sprang at

him before he could seize her. She grasped at his throat as she grappled with him. Caught unawares in spite of what he had said about his readiness to deal with her, he staggered back. The table against which he brought up saved him from a fall, gave him a breathing space. He tore her hands from his throat. He held her off. He was a strong man in the very prime of life. She had miscalculated the effect of his drinking. The struggle tended to sober him. He kept her at arm's length in an iron grasp with his two hands. He laughed at her.

"So, my little spitfire," he began, "you have some of the passion of the women of my country after all. But I like you the better for it. I love you. Why struggle further? Come! you shall be my wife, if you will. How say you? In honor mine?"

That was the last straw to poor Donna Inez' burden. On the instant she slipped out of the door; soundlessly she moved toward the two, who were still struggling, for Captain Cueto's appeal had only moved Audrey to fight the harder. She must get free now, and draw that pistol and kill him. There was no other way.

Only, as it was her last resort, she must not make any mistake. She must be free to use the weapon with absolute assurance, so she struggled desperately for release, and neither man nor girl saw the stealthily approaching woman; for Donna Inez, too, must make sure of her aim before she struck. Finally, writhing like a wild cat, Audrey, with torn garments, half exposed to his brutal view, wrenched herself free. She staggered back and drew the pistol. The light flashed on

the polished steel of the barrel. At the instant Donna Inez stumbled against a pitcher thrown from the table in the struggle. Captain Cueto heard, turned his head to confront the Spanish fury with upraised dagger.

And as he sprang back he brought Audrey into Donna Inez' field of view. She saw the American girl raise the pistol. Her purpose changed. Love was stronger than jealousy or revenge.

"Don Baldamero," she cried in terror, dropping the dagger, "you will be killed!"

As she spoke she sprang forward to cover the captain's body and shield him with her own. And at that instant Audrey's finger pressed the trigger.

None of the people in the cabin in the excitement of the tense moments had been aware of a sudden tumult outside. From that part of the harbor where the *Esmeralda* lay came shots, and shouts, and cries. On the *Sharon* the sound of men hastily awakened, running forward, and crying out as they ran also broke the stillness of the ship.

For the moment Captain Cueto was oblivious to the tumult. He heard only Donna Inez' scream of pain. He saw only her body upon the deck at his feet. He bent over her, truly appalled at this catastrophe as terrible as it was unforeseen.

As for Audrey, the pistol dropped to the deck. She covered her face with her hands. Nothing could happen to her now. She had shot a woman, who lay dead, or dying, perhaps, at her feet. She hid her face in her hands and groaned aloud. She had shot a woman!

CHAPTER XXV

THE ADMIRAL'S AMAZING EXPLOIT

THE night was dark and moonless; the sky was slightly overcast. Not a star was seen. Nothing better for their enterprise could have been devised. At four bells in the first night watch, or ten o'clock, the men who had been mustered on the *O'Higgins* descended to the boats.

The oars of all had been muffled by wrapping the rowlocks and the oar handles with cloth, and in half an hour, all the boats having been manned without noise or confusion, the admiral gave the signal for the silent advance. And it is evidence of Cochrane's ascendancy over his men that he not only commanded silence, but he secured it. He led the way in his own barge. With him went three junior officers, two English, one American, and a number of Chileans, besides the boat's crew, who were, of course, all South Americans.

The boats proceeded slowly by the admiral's explicit direction, his own boat some distance in the lead. He did not want his men to row hard for the long distance between the blockading station and the anchorage. In the first place, it would tire out the men; in the second place, it would make more noise; in the third place, he himself had something to do before the rest of the boats could do anything.

He had carefully picked the crew of his barge and he felt supremely confident in his ability to accomplish his own task upon which so much depended. Not a boat showed a light, but they kept near enough together for the rear boat, which was Clough's, to distinguish the boat next ahead, and so on along the line. They rowed in a long column, not in line abreast, because they knew they would have to pass through the narrow opening in the boom which was only broad enough for one boat at a time.

They might have blown up that obstruction, of course, but the *Esmeralda* lay some distance in from the boom, and an explosion would have indicated their presence at once and have subjected them to the fire of every gun on the shore, and of the frigate, and of the gun-boats before they reached their quarry. Such an amazing enterprise was only possible if they could effect a complete surprise, at least at first.

Telling Captain Crosbie who had command of the first division, to keep the pace he had set, and promising to wait for him at the boom, the admiral presently bade his own oarsmen take up a quicker stroke and put a little more power into it. The *O'Higgins* had been edged in pretty close to the boom, so that the mile or more intervening between her and the obstruction was soon passed over.

When he could see the boom because of the waves breaking over it under the force of the tide and the gentle breeze—it was just at the height of the flood, by the way, and Cochrane had so timed his advance that he would have the aid of the full ebb to get out of

the harbor when he had done his work—he ordered his men to cease rowing and drifted in slowly with the dying flood.

Now there were lights in the town, in the Spanish forts, on the three ships and on the *Esmeralda*. Cochrane had carefully taken his bearings from these. With prescient eye he knew exactly where the opening of the boom was, and he gave explicit directions to the gallant young Chilean midshipman sitting in the coxswain's box handling the tiller. Under Cochrane's instruction the lad, who was a great favorite of the admiral's, had developed into an accomplished young sailor, and he steered the barge perfectly.

By Cochrane's order the oars of the crew were now noiselessly stowed inboard, every man had his pistol out. Without a sound and without a light or anything else to betray their presence, the barge drifted toward the opening under the momentum given it by the last few extra vigorous strokes.

There, sure enough, lay the Spanish guard-boat. Her crew had drawn her to one side and tied her up against the boom. They seemed to be asleep. At any rate, they kept negligent watch. Nobody appeared to be moving aboard her. And in fact it was not until the big barge of the admiral glided quietly into the opening and bumped alongside the guard-boat that anybody aboard her realized what was happening. When they did comprehend, it was too late. For they opened their eyes to the fact that they were staring into the muzzles of a score of leveled pistols.

The admiral remarked in Spanish quickly that if any-

one uttered a sound or opened his mouth in outcry they would all be shot dead. In their astonishment and surprise they had neglected to cry out when they might have done so, and now it was too late. *El Diabolo*, the terrible, was upon them!

Hastily disarming the Spaniards and piling their weapons in his own boat, Cochrane waited until the first division came up. At the last moment, to provide for this very contingency, he had manned the *O'Higgins'* jolly boat, or dingey, and after it arrived with the other boats, he transshipped the crew of the dingey to the Spanish guard-boat, the dingey was fastened to the stern of the guard-boat, the Spaniards were forced to take the oars and, covered by the weapons of the dingey's crew, they ignominiously rowed themselves and their amused and triumphant captors back to the *O'Higgins* in humiliated silence. On their arrival they were made prisoners and stowed below in the hold.

All this was accomplished without any noise whatsoever. No alarm of any kind had been given. It was astonishing that the admiral had been able to teach these Chileans to undertake and carry out such enterprises without chattering like a lot of monkeys. No one on Spanish ships or Peruvian shore had the least suspicion of what had happened or what was toward.

This having been so successfully attended to, Cochrane now stood up in the stern sheets of the barge and asked quietly of the nearest boat:

"Are we all here?"

Word was promptly passed down the line in whis-

pers and a report was soon returned that all boats were present, closed up, and ready.

"Is the American there also?" asked the admiral.

Upon receiving assurance as to this, Cochrane ordered the boats under way again and they all rowed silently through the opening in close succession. It was a peculiarity of this dashing seaman that although he believed profoundly in speed and striking the blow promptly, he did not do things in any reckless hurry.

As the boats passed the now unguarded boom, the order to rest on oars was given and they glided on fanwise into a line abreast with slowly diminishing momentum. When all were through and in position, Admiral Cochrane attached himself to Crosbie's division, with which he had decided to attack the *Esmeralda* on the starboard side. He commanded Guise to make a detour to attack on the port side, which was the land side, and pointing out for the last time to the American his quarry, the *Sharon*, he rowed down the line, slowly stopping before each boat to address a few hearty encouraging words to the crews thereof. And it was with the utmost difficulty that the excitable Chileans kept from bursting into wild cheers.

It was a very dramatic situation, this silent and ghostlike review in the darkness of the night, inside the boom and almost within striking distance of the *Esmeralda* and the *Sharon*, with their still unsuspecting crews. One thing the admiral particularly emphasized was that all hands should look out for the young American woman, who might be dressed as a boy. The men were enjoined on penalty of death to spare her, to spare all

women, for there might be many frail ones on the ships in the harbor, according to the custom of the day, which was by no means peculiar to Spanish ships, either.

It was late now, nearly twelve o'clock. In fact, after they got under way they heard the bells of the churches in the city solemnly striking the hour. They heard, nearer at hand, the sharper, quicker, midnight couplets of the bells of the ships also—eight bells and all is well!

“Slowly at first,” the commanding officer said, “and then, when we get nearer, put everything in the oars and make a dash for her. Crosbie, I will board at the gangway. Two of your boats board over the bows, the other four at the fore, main, and mizzen chains. Guise, you follow the same plan astern and to port. Captain Clough, you know your own plan. Give way.”

Rowing gently, the fourteen Chilean boats and the launch approached the doomed ships. As they proceeded, a gap widened between Crosbie's division and Guise's as the two captains headed in the several directions necessary to accomplish their undertaking. Away off to the left the admiral, who was unusually keen sighted, could make out a moving blur, which showed that Clough's boat was also heading for its destination.

After about five minutes' slow rowing, the excitement of the situation got into the admiral's blood. This was like old times. The fighting game was to be played once more. The *Esmeralda* was now close at hand. Lights suddenly moved on her deck. A voice hailed.

“Give way strong!” shouted the admiral loudly, his pulses bounding; for all his age and rank he was

once again the gallant young man of the *Speedy*. The next second every man bent to the oars.

The water whitened and splashed over the blades as the big boats jumped through the quiet sea. The barge dashed ahead of the other boats; although all the men in the cutters and launches, especially in Crosbie's own boat the gig, in which old Broadrib pulled a strong stroke oar, put everything they had into the endeavor, they could not keep pace with the picked men of Cochrane.

The hail from the *Esmeralda* was repeated. More lights appeared; an alarm was given. The next minute the barge crashed into the side of the frigate. A musket shot rang out. More voices were heard on the *Esmeralda's* decks, more lights appeared. There were sudden commands, cries of alarm. Lieutenant Suarez awoke from his dreams and seized his weapons. What was happening?

The admiral had gone forward in the barge and as the boat struck the gangway he leaped for the side battens. Before anyone else could get out, he was half way up those battens—pieces of wood nailed to the side of a ship to permit people to climb to the deck when no ladders were dropped—and by the time they got the boat secured, he sprang through the gangway, an opening in the high rail, or bulwark, to admit free passage.

At him a sentry came running. Cochrane's pistol flashed; its bullet went true, but the momentum of the falling sentry was so great that as he went down he struck the admiral with the butt of his gun. Cochrane

made a clutch at the rail, but so terrific had been the blow on his chest that he failed to catch it. He could not maintain his balance and he dropped fifteen feet into the boat below.

Unfortunately he alighted on his back, and one of the tholepins—"U"-shaped pieces of iron sticking up on the gunwale of a boat through which the oars were thrust—cut through his clothing and pierced his back near the spine, inflicting a terribly painful and somewhat dangerous wound which would have entirely disabled most men.

In his excitement the admiral scarcely noticed it. Fortunately the men in the boat had broken his fall somewhat, or he might have been impaled. They dragged him to his feet and with a word of encouragement the intrepid seaman prepared to ascend again. The boat had drifted aft and was now abreast the main chains—a broad platform extending outside the ship by which the standing rigging of the main mast was given a wider spread. He jumped to the chains and others sprang with him. One of Crosbie's boats took the place of the admiral's boat at the gangway. The next minute the whole side of the frigate was alive with men climbing up to gain her decks.

But the Spaniards, to give them credit, had profited by the few moments of alarm. Lieutenant Suarez was a brave man and he had acted instantly upon his realization that his ship was attacked, and his officers, despite the absence of their captain, seconded him well. The decks of the *Esmeralda* were now filled with men hastily arming themselves. Aft on the quarter deck a company

of soldiers, or marines, was hastily formed up for the fight. Crosbie and his men burst on board in the waist. Although several of them were shot down, the rest, cheered on by the admiral, used their pistols with much effect and then fell to with their cutlasses so that they separated the Spaniards and drove them to either end of the ship. Suarez with a number of them retreated across the vessel, and with their backs to the rail, offered a desperate resistance. The next moment Guise with his division fell upon them.

By this time the *Esmeralda* was alive with sound, shouts, cheers, shrieks, groans, yells, pistol and musket shots, the smashing and grinding of sword blades, words of command. The noise awoke everybody in the harbor. A gun boomed out from the citadel as a signal, and while the dreadful conflict raged on the decks, the Spanish batteries and gun-boats opened fire. They did not know exactly at what to fire at first, but presently realized in a sort of despairful way that *El Diabolo* must have somehow got into the harbor and attacked the surprised *Esmeralda*.

They therefore fired on the frigate, dealing death and destruction to friend and foe alike. Some of the Spanish officers, half dressed, but armed, had been driven to the fore-castle. They made a gallant stand there, and as the crew poured out of the fore scuttle, for a moment things looked encouraging, but Cochrane in person led a charge upon them.

Old Broadrib had finally got to his commander's side and vainly tried to interpose his body between the firing and his lordship. The Spaniards received the rush

of the Chileans with a volley from their pistols at close range. With a bad bullet wound in his thigh, the admiral, who had exposed himself as recklessly as any junior officer, went smashing down to the decks. The sight of his fall—for the ship was now brilliantly lighted with lanterns and flares—gave the Spaniards much encouragement.

Lieutenant Suarez headed a rush of the Spanish after-guard, who had all rallied with him. But Broadrib, standing across the body of the admiral, yelling like a mad man, received the brunt of the Spanish advance. The next moment Crosbie led his men forward. A grape shot from the nearest fort at that instant struck Lieutenant Suarez in the arm, broke it, and knocked him over. There was a brief, fierce mêlée around the foremast and on the forecastle, in which all the Spaniards were finally shot down, driven below, or forced overboard, and in this mêlée poor Suarez was trampled under foot and finally killed—a quick and unlooked-for ending to his treacherous schemes and plans.

Meanwhile the harbor was now ablaze with light and full of sound. Every gun on shore or sea was firing. The two foreign ships of war had hoisted their lights and the Spanish gunners were trying to avoid hitting them, but without much success. They finally cut cables and got under way before the land breeze to get out of range, which added to the bewilderment of the Spanish.

The Chilean lieutenant who had carried the admiral's challenge and received the information regarding the lights had not forgot the instructions Cochrane had



The admiral in person led the charge

given him, and even before they had got possession of the ship, he raced up to the masthead and hoisted exactly the same signal lights on the *Esmeralda*. This confused the Spaniards still more. They were not sure which was the ship at which they were to aim, so they began to fire at all three. The *Macedonian* and the *Hyperion* were actually hulled several times before they got beyond gunshot.

The *Esmeralda*, however, was not yet in complete possession of the boarding party. The soldiers on the quarter deck had maintained their ranks and presented a firm front to the onfalls of the Chileans. Captain Guise, for all his insubordination, was a man of courage, and as he was senior captain, the command devolved upon him, for Cochrane was now helpless and suffering greatly from his two wounds. He led a charge in person upon the soldiers. These men, true to the gallant traditions of the Spanish army, refusing to surrender, were cut down to a man. That was the end of all resistance. In fifteen minutes from Admiral Cochrane's first leap at the gangway, the *Esmeralda* was in the possession of the Chileans!

Old Broadrib now carried Cochrane into the captain's cabin, and the doctor was summoned. The admiral was nearly speechless from loss of blood and shock and was suffering greatly, but the doctor, who administered restoratives and checked the flow of blood, thought he would certainly recover.

"Tell Captain Guise," said the admiral, "to keep fast the ship and at once open fire on the forts and other vessels."

Old Broadrib turned to deliver the message, only to find that it was too late. Captain Guise, although he had fought like a hero, had been overwhelmed with the situation, and as he was in technical command upon Cochrane's disablement, he had already ordered the cables of the *Esmeralda* cut, and her topsails were even then being sheeted home. His only idea was to get out of the harbor with the prize.

It was too late to carry out the rest of Cochrane's plan. So soon as he knew from the heel and the movement of the ship that she was under way, the admiral realized that the golden opportunity had gone. He never had liked Guise, and he hated him from that hour, for Cochrane was persuaded that since they had so easily captured the *Esmeralda*, the rest of his plan could have been as easily carried out. Indeed, he sent Guise back to Valparaiso at the first convenient opportunity and refused to allow him again to sail under his flag.

The big frigate, a target for all the guns in the harbor, rushed rapidly toward the boom under a freshening breeze. Guise, who was a good seaman, had now loosed her courses and had men aloft on the topgallant yards when she struck the boom. He had sent the rest of the men to the batteries and the *Esmeralda* was exchanging broadside for broadside with forts and shipping as she rushed away.

The boom was a stout one, but it had not been designed to keep out ships, and the stem of the *Esmeralda* rose up on it, hung there for a moment, and then it parted and she was free.

Morning found them safely outside the harbor and under the lee of the *O'Higgins*.

No more astounding feat of arms had ever been attempted or carried out than that. With fourteen boats and two hundred and forty men armed with cutlasses and pistols, Cochrane had cut out a brand new forty-four-gun frigate with three hundred and sixty picked men aboard her, protected by batteries of three hundred guns aided by thirty gun-boats, two sloops of war, and all manned by ten thousand men! He had done it with a loss of only eleven killed and thirty wounded, while the loss of the Spaniards was one hundred and sixty killed on the *Esmeralda* and nobody ever knew how many were wounded and driven overboard. And this says nothing of the loss of men and the damage that was done by the fire of the *Esmeralda* at ships, forts, and shore as she raced to the sea. She had been struck a good many times by shots from the Spanish batteries, but she had received no damage that could not be repaired and she was soon made entirely seaworthy and taken into the Chilean service.

Of all Admiral Cochrane's extraordinary and romantic exploits, this was indeed the greatest and most amazing. If it had not been for his two wounds, he would have stayed in the harbor with the *Esmeralda* and fought the batteries and ships until all the latter at least had been destroyed.

He was fearfully angry at the failure of Captain Guise to obey his orders that had been given him, and to carry out the plan, but he consoled himself every time he caught a glimpse of the captured Spanish frigate,

through his cabin windows on the *O'Higgins*. The surgeons had decided that his wounds, while painful, were not dangerous and that he would not be incapacitated very long. Such was his indomitable spirit, however, that he resumed and continued to exercise the command of the squadron from his cabin, much to the disgust of Guise and Crosbie.

In only one other thing had he failed. There was no American woman, no girl dressed in boy's clothes, among the unfortunate captives who were overlooked and questioned by old Broadrib in a vain search for Audrey. In their terror and excitement they could tell him nothing, especially as there were no officers of rank among them. The only hope was that she might have been on the *Sharon*, whose fortunes have yet to be related.

CHAPTER XXVI

CUTTING OUT THE SHARON

WHILE all this had been going on, Captain Clough's boat had also been busy. The Americans had been given the last place in the line for a very good reason.

Admiral Cochrane could only spare him one boat and its complement. The crews of the *O'Higgins* and her consorts were not large, and the total number aboard the launch was only thirty-six, counting the three people of the *Sharon*. The admiral and Captain Clough both thought it quite likely that a heavy guard would be placed on the *Sharon* to protect her. The *Sharon* lay nearer the shore than the *Esmeralda*, not, however, directly under the guns of any fort or battery, but nearer certain lights which would render an attacking party more visible to the defenders than in the case of the *Esmeralda*. A complete surprise could hardly be hoped for, especially as there was but one boat to attack her.

The battle on the *Esmeralda* would undoubtedly attract the attention and arouse the interest of any men on the *Sharon*. The *Sharon* was so moored that her bows pointed toward the *Esmeralda*. Her crew would naturally run forward at the first alarm on the other ship. And this might give the Americans a chance to

board her aft and gain the decks unobserved, or without much opposition. For that plan one large boat was less likely to attract attention than several smaller ones. At least that was the way the young captain reasoned. The whole affair had been talked over between the admiral and himself and they were in absolute agreement.

Just as soon as the admiral's division pulled away directly for the *Esmeralda*, Captain Clough, instead of pulling directly for the *Sharon*, rowed along the boom, which ran parallel to a line between the two ships. His men, like the others, rowed in perfect silence and rather slowly, not leaving the shelter of the boom until they had got well past the whaler lying motionless at her moorings.

By this means they succeeded in gaining a position directly astern the *Sharon* just about the time the admiral sought to board the frigate. Their proximity was evidently not suspected by the anchor watch on the whaler, fortunately. Captain Clough therefore ordered his men to lay on their oars and wait, although he was naturally wildly anxious for action. The men in the boat did not know why he stopped and wondered, the Chileans with some suspicions of his courage in their minds; suspicions which, of course, Rice and Storey did not entertain. The two Americans knew that no more intrepid man sailed the seas than their young commander, but to the Chileans it looked as if he had suddenly become sick of his job, and they were correspondingly resentful and depressed.

It all happened just as the admiral and the captain

had foreseen. When the *Esmeralda* was boarded and the noise of the battle was heard, lights had appeared on the *Sharon*, and her crew, summoned by the anchor watch and the shouts of Lieutenant Morelos, came running up on deck. Naturally, they pressed forward to see what was happening aboard the frigate. Seeing the after part of the ship deserted, Captain Clough ordered his men to give way gently. After a few easy strokes, he directed them to give way hard.

Now lights appeared all along the shore. Bonfires, which had been prepared for such an emergency, were kindled, and into the light of them swept the *Independencia's* launch, which had been lent to the Americans for the occasion. They were but a few fathoms from the stern of the *Sharon* at the time.

The appearance of the boat could mean but one thing to the Spaniards in the nearest battery. They instantly let fly a broadside from the shore. One shot struck the launch, broke an oar, plowed a hole in her, instantly killed the man sitting on the thwart, and wounded the man opposite. It was lucky for the Americans that they were so close to the whaler, for the launch would hardly float five minutes in such a state. The next few seconds carried them out of range of the batteries and under the stern of the *Sharon*. As the way of the launch was checked, a man rose from a shore boat concealed from the assailants under the quarter, stared a moment, and then shouted loudly in great alarm. The Americans paid no attention to this man. He could do no damage, and they had things of greater moment to occupy their minds.

Rice, who was steering, put the tiller hard to starboard and the boat's head swung to port and she came to rest parallel to the stern. As yet, she had not been noticed by the men on the decks above, who were all forward. The greatest amount of shouting, and yelling, and confusion was going on forward. The men on the *Sharon* were getting their arms and making ready for—they knew not what.

Luckily, the whaler was not directly under the guns of any shore battery, and thus she was, for the time being, safe from heavy shot from the shore, but rifle and musket bullets were hurtling through the air all about her, and she was in the very center of the infernal mêlée that was being kicked up. This was a good thing, because the crew of the launch inevitably made a good deal of noise in boarding her.

Captain Clough, with a vivid remembrance of the time that he had done the same thing before, sprang to the Jacob's ladder, scrambled up it, and made for the cabin window, half the Chileans following him. Rice and Storey went up the other Jacob's ladder, but finding the cabin window on their side closed, and the port shutters locked, they kept on until they reached the taffrail, where they soon drew themselves on deck, followed by their men. Both ladders were filled with men, those to starboard making for the cabin, those to port already scrambling over the rail.

Inside the cabin no one had moved since the alarm on the decks without. Audrey still leaned against the bulkhead. Captain Cueto still knelt by the side of Donna Inez, whose breathing showed that she was

not yet dead at any rate. It was Jose's wild shout of alarm that broke the spell.

Captain Cueto caught one word, *Inglesias!* of dreadful purport. The next moment unmistakable sounds convinced him that the ship was attacked by the stern. He did not lack personal courage. He sprang to his feet, whipped out the light dress sword he was wearing, rushed to the door of the berth to starboard, thrusting aside Audrey with his left hand as he burst into the smaller cabin. Captain Clough was already half way in the room. He filled the stern window completely, and was clearly seen in the light cast by the lanterns in the main cabin.

He was at a terrible disadvantage when Captain Cueto, recognizing him, shortened his sword, and with a fierce cry of joy leaped at him to thrust him through. Clough could not strike or parry with his cutlass owing to his constrained position. His pistol hand was free and he hastily raised the weapon and pressed the trigger, but his aim was hurried and uncertain. Captain Cueto sprang aside. It was a clean miss. Death certain and quick was at the point of the Spaniard's shining blade. He drew back for the thrust, and then Audrey, who had come to sudden life at the shot, and had at last followed him into the cabin, seized his arm. She saw her lover's terrible peril, and acted with her usual promptitude and success.

Captain Cueto's thrust went into the air; he turned and struck Audrey with his fist, and as she fell he faced the raging American, who had gained his footing in the cabin and rushed at him, cutlass in hand.

The Spaniard was no mean fencer. His light sword was scarcely a match for the broad and heavy blade of the cutlass. Yet he made up in part by his skill for this disadvantage. He retreated to the larger outer cabin where his science and skill would be more easily employed and of better service to him. And as he retreated he called for help.

But the American officer, jumping over the prostrate body of Audrey, would not be denied. Before the rest of the Chileans had entered the cabin he had beaten down the Spaniard's guard by the impetuosity of his mighty attack. The latter's sword was broken off at the hilt, and a second later he was driven to his knees by a mighty blow, and fell senseless by the body of Donna Inez.

The next moment Audrey, who had been helped to her feet by the first of the Chilean boarders, was in Captain Clough's arms.

"Safe, unharmed?" he cried, straining her to his heart amid the smiles and cheers of his men.

"Yes, thank God," she answered, her eyes shining, her face aflame.

He kissed her, tore himself away, and rushed to the cabin door opening on the quarter deck, all, including Audrey herself, following him with glad hearts and high courage, leaving the cabin to the wounded, unconscious Spaniard and the poor Donna Inez, of Peru.

Now not more than half a dozen of the other party had gained the quarter deck from the poop when they were observed. Every available lantern had been lighted on the ship and the Americans were in plain

view. Lieutenant Morelos recognized the two Americans who had been on the *Esmeralda* with him. He shouted loudly and his cry was heard on the ship above the noise of the conflict. The astonished Spaniards crowded forward, faced aft. They saw a little group of seamen, cutlass and pistol in hand, by the mizzen mast, and a constant succession of men coming over the break of the poop. Those forward who had weapons discharged them, in their excitement and in the dim light harmlessly, and then, led by the lieutenant, they dashed aft, streaming through the gangways on both sides of the ship.

Rice and Storey, as brave seamen as ever lived, did not wait to receive the rush. They met it with a rush of their own. Yelling like maniacs, they sprang forward of the mizzen mast, rushed across the quarter deck, and struck the two crowds of Spaniards just as they came together abaft the main mast. They were followed most gallantly by the Chileans, who showed that night on board the ship the highest kind of desperate, headlong courage. All they needed was good leadership, and they had it on the *Sharon* as on the *Esmeralda*.

They hated the Spaniards with a bitter hatred, and they did not spare. The Spaniards returned the hatred of the Chileans, and they were brave, too. Although Rice, and Storey, and the first four men fairly shoved their pistols in the faces of the Spaniards and crumpled up the front rank of them, the rest came crowding on. There were, apparently, at least fifty of them.

By this time all of the men forward in the launch

had gained the deck, bringing Rice and Storey's party up to about twenty. They were all furiously engaged at once; cutting, and slashing, and swearing, and yelling, they swayed back and forth on the deck, but the mass of Spaniards was too great for the twenty boarders long to withstand. They were slowly pushed back. One or two of the Chileans were cut down. All that saved them was the fact that there were so many Spaniards, and they were so crowded together in the gangways that it was difficult for them to use their weapons effectively. They thought they had, however, all the boarders before them, and they were confident they could easily overcome these few.

Rice, and Storey, and their men meanwhile were wondering what had become of Captain Clough and his party. They knew him too thoroughly to question his courage but the rest of the Chileans thought they had been betrayed and being pushed against the starboard rail, they even contemplated jumping overboard to gain the launch astern, which still floated, although it was now awash.

"We have them! We have them!" shouted the Spanish lieutenant. "Drive the rebel dogs into the water!"

The next minute a shriek rose from the men in the rear rank, who had been vainly trying to get at the Americans, for the fifteen men under Captain Clough fell upon them. The shriek apprised Lieutenant Morelos that something was wrong. He was a man of courage and resourcefulness, however, and without relaxing the pressure upon Rice, and Storey, and their men,

he ordered his rear rank to face about. Those who had survived the impact of the Americans sought to do so, but Captain Clough pressed his attack home desperately. From probable victors the Spaniards were caught between two forces and faced annihilation. They fought on—there was nothing else to do—and now with the courage of despair.

Clough, all of whose skill as a swordsman had come back to him, and whose conduct now won the highest approval of his Chilean auxiliaries, had forced the fighting at the rear of the Spanish line. Rice, and Storey, and their men, animated by the appearance of their comrades, also fought with renewed valor, and when Captain Clough, with a sweeping slash, finally cut down the Spanish lieutenant the surviving men threw down their arms. The thirty-six had boarded and captured the ship despite the fifty defenders. In its way it was as great a feat of arms as the taking of the *Esmeralda*.

Of the Spaniards, twenty were dead, or so severely wounded as to be helpless; ten more had received less severe wounds and could move about. There were twenty who were unharmed. Of the attacking party, ten were dead, three severely wounded, among the latter being Rice. Storey, and Clough, and Audrey were unharmed. Captain Clough had been grazed by a bullet. Rice's hurt was a deep saber cut in the arm. It had taken the Americans a little longer to capture the *Sharon* than the admiral had required to take the *Esmeralda*, and the fighting had been quite as fierce.

As Clough looked about him, panting from his exer-

tions, he saw the *Esmeralda's* topsails fall and the ship slowly move toward the boom and the mouth of the harbor.

"Storey," he called out.

"Sir?"

"Drive these Spaniards down the fore hatch and put a heavy guard over them."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Rey," said Captain Clough, using the old boyish name, and apparently forgetful of her sex, and for the moment of everything but the grave need of the critical hour, "take ten men and jump aloft and loose the mains'l." He turned to a Chilean bo's'n's mate, whose name he had learned. "Manuel," he pointed to the spanker. "Storey," he called as the unwounded Spaniards went reluctantly forward, driven by Storey and half a score of men, "loose the heads'ls and fores'l as soon as you get these men under hatches. I will take a look at Rice. Bear a hand all, lively now!"

The men ran to their several stations. The Spaniards were hustled below; the hatch was clapped to and hastily battened; the fore and main courses were loosed; the jib was set; the spanker was hauled out; the mooring cables ahead and astern were cut, and in a moment the *Sharon* began to forge ahead.

As soon as she had steerage way on her, Clough gave the helm to Storey, and after having assured himself that Rice's wound was not fatal, and bidding Audrey, who had come down from aloft to look after him, he ran forward to con the ship.

The attention of the Spanish batteries was concen-

trated, of course, on the *Esmeralda*, which was now blazing away with all her guns. For a time the *Sharon* was not noticed, but just as soon as she swung into the wake of the *Esmeralda*, and as they saw her dark bulk in the flashing light from the frigate's guns, the Spaniards diverted a goodly portion of their fire to her. A good many shots came aboard. Several tore through the fore and main sails; others went over her; and if she had had her proper topmasts and yards on her, undoubtedly would have done much damage. But as it was, no shot that struck her was serious, or wounded her in a vital part. Of course, she sailed much more slowly than the *Esmeralda* and was under fire for a longer time. But by cleverly following the course of the frigate, Captain Clough finally brought the whaler through the break she had made in the boom and gradually left the Spanish batteries out of range.

"Well," he said to Audrey, and Rice, who was lying on the deck after having been made as comfortable as possible, and all the others, "lads, we have got our ship back again. Three cheers!"

The four Americans led off with three hearty cheers, Audrey's voice rising above the rest. The Chileans, understanding at last what was toward, joined madly with wild but triumphant yells in the final cheer.

CHAPTER XXVII

WITH FAIR WIND FOR HOME

BY DAYBREAK Captain Clough had the *Sharon* safely hove to near the *O'Higgins*. He called away a boat and, leaving Storey in command of the ship, he was rowed to the flagship to make his report and to pay his respects to his benefactor, Audrey accompanying him.

"Admiral," said Clough, when he was ushered into Lord Cochrane's cabin, "we got our ship, and the young lady, and here she is."

He moved aside as he spoke, and Audrey, in her jaunty boy's suit, stood forth in full view of the great admiral. She was blushing furiously and wishing with all her heart that she had her own proper clothes on. But there was nothing on the *Sharon* but the Spanish dress so hateful to her, which she had put off before the scene in the cabin, which she vowed to herself she would not wear again. Her own women's clothes were on the Spanish frigate, if they had not been made away with, and she had nothing else.

Besides, she had enjoyed little or no time to make any change. As soon as the *Sharon* had cleared the boom and dropped out of range of the shore batteries, she had gone into the cabin to look after the two prisoners therein. To her great relief she found that her

bullet had only grazed Donna Inez' head. Save for the shock, the Spanish lady was all right. And the white bandage she had improvised and tied about her head over her dark locks rather added to than detracted from her appearance.

Captain Cueto was in much worse case. The heavy blade of the American's cutlass had bitten deep into his shoulder. He had lost much blood, and looked it. Donna Inez had bared his shoulder, stanchd the flow, bandaged the wound temporarily, and had assisted him to a berth in the captain's cabin, where Audrey found them.

Donna Inez had looked at her with great disfavor. She was still jealous, and naturally so.

"It is the Americana. Shall I leave you to her, Don Baldamero?" she began, withdrawing her hand and moving aside.

But Captain Cueto caught her hand and held it with a strength unexpected in view of his condition.

"Wait," he began, "you, Donna Inez, and you, too, Señorita, hear me. I do not know what they will do to me. But I must clear my conscience. My conduct was quite unworthy a gentleman of Spain. I ask your forgiveness, Señorita, and yours, beloved Donna Inez. I have lost my ship, and perhaps stand to lose my life. If I can regain your respect, Señorita, and retain your affection, Donna Inez, I can at least die without repining."

It was a long speech, he had raised himself a little to give emphasis to his confession and apology, and he now fell back exhausted.

"I forgive you and love you, dear Don Baldamero," said Donna Inez, bending over him.

"And I will at least do the first after your handsome apology," said Audrey, glad that everything had turned out so well. "If it rests with me, and I think I may speak for Captain Clough, whom I am to marry," she continued with pardonable pride, "I think you can both go free."

"May Christ and His Holy Mother and all the Saints bless you," cried Donna Inez, as Audrey turned away.

"I was mad to think for an instant of that pale-faced American," Audrey heard Captain Cueto say, as she left them together.

It was not flattering to her, but it certainly was pleasing to poor Donna Inez and Audrey was glad. There was only one man in whose eyes she must appear the most desired of women. She closed the door behind her and the next moment another pair of lovers were together, for Captain Clough came into the main cabin and took her in his arms. He did not leave her in doubt as to what he thought. When coherent speech was possible after those blissful moments alone she told him about the other two and her promise.

Captain Clough was not in a mood to deny the brave woman, whom he loved and who had twice saved his life in the cabin of that very ship, anything she requested. He readily agreed to her proposed disposition of the prisoners, always provided he received the approval of Admiral Cochrane, under whose command he certainly had placed himself.

Indeed it was to tell Audrey they must go aboard the flagship and report at once that he came.

"In these clothes!" exclaimed the girl.

"Lord Cochrane is a sailor and you are a picture to fill a sailor's eye and a sailor's heart. Come as you are. Time enough for dresses later."

Thus Audrey found herself, blushing, nervous, not a little awed indeed, before the great sailor of fortune.

In his turn he regarded the extremely boyish young lady with curiosity and interest to which manifest approval succeeded.

"My gallant young American friend," he began at last, addressing Captain Clough, "now that I see the young lady, even in that fetching rig-out, I don't wonder at your anxiety and that you took the bold and quick course. You are unharmed, my child?"

"Yes, your lordship, save for a few bruises," answered Audrey, starting to courtesy like a woman and then remembering and saluting, knuckling her forehead in true seamanlike fashion.

The admiral laughed kindly and turned to Clough again.

"I congratulate you on the safety of the lady and your successful seizure of your ship. I knew you would do it, of course. The first thing I asked as the *Esmeralda* left the harbor, was whether you were following or not. Were you under fire long?"

"Longer than I liked, sir," answered Captain Clough. "But no serious damage has been done. None that ship carpenters and riggers cannot repair in a day or two."

"Tell me about how you took her and what happened to the little boy-lady here," said the admiral, whereupon Captain Clough related the details of the adventure, which Audrey, encouraged by the admiral's kindly interest, explained more fully from time to time.

"You have a fondness for boarding through stern windows, it seems," said Cochrane, smiling in spite of his weakness and pain. "Well, sir, it was most handsomely done by both of you. Young lady, you are the very wife for a gallant seaman and Captain Clough is to be congratulated. Now as to your losses, sir?"

"We have lost nine of your Chilean seamen and a bo's'n's mate killed, I am sorry to report, sir, and we have two more severely wounded, with two slightly wounded who will be fit for duty in a few days."

"And your own men, sir?"

"One of my men has a sword cut in the arm, not dangerous. I was grazed by a bullet and that is all."

"I will send my surgeon off to look at your wounded at once. The dead you had better send here to be buried with our poor fellows."

"I shall attend to it at once, your lordship."

Captain Clough saluted, but hung in the wind a moment. Obviously he had something else on his mind and, although the admiral's surgeon came into the cabin where the admiral lay with a warning against a longer continuance of the conversation in his weakened condition, Cochrane waved him aside.

"You had something more to say to me, Captain Clough?" he asked.

"Yes, my lord."

"Speak out, then."

"It's about that Spanish captain, sir."

"Ah, I had overlooked him for the moment. Send him aboard at once."

"Begging your pardon, sir, but Miss McRae, here, promised to—to—intercede with your lordship for him and the lady."

"Won't you let them go free, sir?" asked Audrey. "He is sorry and badly wounded, and I almost killed her."

"My dear young lady," answered the admiral, "I can refuse so brave and splendid a girl nothing. Besides, Captain Clough, he was in your ship. You captured him. He is your prisoner, not mine. I am not supposed to know anything about his disposition. If I make any inquiries it will be too late."

"I thank your lordship," said Audrey gratefully.

"Not at all. Now, Doctor, would you mind calling my orderly and bid him tell old Broadrib to come here?"

In a few moments the old harpooner presented himself.

"As you see, Broadrib, the young lady is here safe and sound and——"

But Audrey did not wait for the completion of the admiral's sentence. She fairly threw herself into the arms of the delighted old seaman and before he could say a word she kissed his weather-beaten cheek, she was so glad to see him. The admiral threw back his head for all his weakness and laughed heartily.

"First time in my life I have envied my chief boat-swain's mate," he said presently.

"Oh, sir," said Audrey, smiling in turn, "if I had not thought you so great——"

"My dear, no man is ever too great to be kissed by a pretty woman, even in boy's clothes."

Audrey bent over the great seaman, old enough to be her father, indeed, and kissed him unblushingly.

"Your lor'ship's was the properest," said old Broadrib, "but mine was the quickest an' most nateral. Miss Audrey, but I'm gladder to see ye alive an' well than to have took the ships."

"Well, Broadrib," said the admiral, "your ship lies out there. I understand you have agreed to help work her back to New Bedford for Captain Clough."

"I have, sir, with your lordship's permission an' for the little lady's sake."

"Tut, tut, man, you need no permission from me."

"But your lordship bein' a British officer an' my old commander——"

Cochrane shook his head.

"I am not a British officer any longer."

"Your lordship," said Captain Clough, "while I can hardly spare him I feel in duty bound to say that if you want Broadrib——"

"I want him," said the earl, "and I have no doubt he wants me, but a bargain's a bargain, hey, Master Broadrib?"

"Yes, your lordship. I feels in duty bound to keep to my word an' help Cap'n Clough work the whaler back to New Bedford for the little lady. Besides which,

there will be a bit of salvage, an' a good lay comin' to me when we gits there."

"You'll get her there, all right," said Cochrane. "Any crew that has gone through all you have and come off first best is able to do anything. Now, Captain Clough, I will have my carpenter's gang, poor enough fellows they are but willing, sent off to your ship. If there are any spare spars on the *Esmeralda* that are useful to you, you can use them to fit out the *Sharon*. There are four Americans, I find, in our squadron who will, I am sure, be glad to join you and I will give orders for their discharge papers to be made out. You will have to pay them well."

"I will be glad to do that. I am sure my owners will be glad to deal generously with them."

"That will give you a crew of nine all told and you ought to be able to work the ship back without any difficulty."

"I am profoundly grateful to your lordship," said Clough. "You have treated us handsomely."

"Tut, tut, man," said the admiral. "Blood is thicker than water. The Americans I have had under me have served me well. I am glad of an opportunity to show my appreciation. How are you off for provisions and water?"

"Well, sir, I had intended to touch at Valparaiso to replenish."

"Take my advice," said the admiral earnestly, "and don't do it. There might be a claim for salvage or prize money entertained. The ship might be libeled and seized in spite of my safe conduct. The whole

proceeding is a bit irregular, you know, and you had better steer clear of that or any other Chilean port. I will fill your water casks and give orders that whatever else you need shall be put aboard from the flagship's stores. Anything else?"

"Shall you be sending a boat ashore, sir?"

"Yes," said the admiral. "I am going to propose an exchange of prisoners. By the way, did you capture any?"

"We have ten severely wounded aboard us, most of whom will die, I think, and twenty unwounded men and a midshipman."

"Good! We'll include those. But did you want to send a message ashore?"

"I would like very much to have a letter delivered to Captain Downes of the *Macedonian*."

"I will see if it can be arranged," said the admiral. "And now, as I am feeling pretty badly, I will ask you to excuse me. Ask the flag captain to step below as you go on deck and I will give him the necessary orders to carry out your needs," said the big-hearted, magnanimous sailor.

"Before I go, admiral, I want you to give me the permission to distribute the contents of this purse among the men who assisted us in cutting out the *Sharon*," said Captain Clough. "There is a thousand dollars here that belonged to Captain Norris, which I feel justified in devoting to this purpose."

"Won't that leave you short of funds?"

"No, sir. I shall have plenty until I get to New Bedford. Following your advice, I do not intend to

touch at a port unless it is absolutely necessary until I get to Buenos Ayres."

"Very well," said the admiral. "Your own men are still on your ship, are they not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Remember, I wish to see you again before you take your departure," said the admiral, dismissing them at last.

In a short time a gang of carpenters, together with the American seamen from the Chilean squadron, who were glad enough of the chance to get back to the United States, came off to the *Sharon*. Captain Clough promised them double wages and a substantial reward if they made New Bedford safely. One of them, named Woodruff, had been a fourth mate and knew enough of navigation to find his way around in case anything happened to Clough. The captain didn't displace old Broadrib from his position as mate, but he appointed Woodruff second mate, and he and Broadrib directing, with Storey to assist, the work of refitting the *Sharon* proceeded merrily. Rice was in a fair way to recover from his wound and Donna Inez and Captain Cueto had been freed and sent ashore.

There were plenty of spare spars in the *Esmeralda* and after several days of steady work the whaler was in fine condition for her long cruise. Admiral Cochrane was as good as his word. He provisioned her generously, he filled her water casks and he even sent off a boat load of delicacies for the officers.

Captain Clough had made glad the hearts of his Chilean shipmates in the adventure by distributing the

thousand dollars among them. They bade him an admiring good-bye and returned to their ship. All was soon ready for the voyage home. But before they put the *Sharon* on her course two things happened. First Captain Clough had the satisfaction of receiving a visit from Captain John Downes, his old commander. The noted American naval officer was amazed and delighted with Audrey, now dressed and, as she fondly hoped, forever in her own proper clothes. Her boxes had been found and she had been busy with her needle while the *Sharon* was being overhauled.

"I never dreamed," said that seaman, "that the *Sharon* was an American ship and that you were cutting her out. I saw, of course, that somebody had taken her and that she was putting for sea. Why didn't you tell me about it, Clough?"

"Well, sir," answered Captain Clough, "I thought you would have made diplomatic representations and we would have got mixed up in law suits and everything else and, as Admiral Cochrane said, the quickest way was to cut her out."

"And you thought that of me?" said bluff Captain Downes, in deep disgust at that mistake. "Diplomacy be damned! If I had known she was an American ship I would have taken her in face of all the Spanish forts on the continent, from the whole Spanish Army and Navy if necessary."

"I believe you would, sir," assented the other, "but in that case your men would have had a claim on her."

"Yes, I guess you got her in the best way after all,"

admitted Downes. "By the way, could you use two or three more men?"

"That I could, sir," said Clough.

"I have two or three that are invalided and want to go home. I think after they get out of these hot latitudes they will be all right. Have you got everything else you need?"

"Everything, sir. Admiral Cochrane has been most kind."

"He is a great fighter," said Downes. "I am glad we never ran up against him in the war of 1812."

"So am I," said Clough. "And yet Commodore Porter in the *Essex*, with you to second him, would have——"

"Tut, tut," laughed Downes. "Well, a safe voyage to you. Do you start immediately?"

"After Miss McRae and I have gone over to pay our respects to the admiral."

"My boat is alongside," said Captain Downes. "I will take you both over and fetch you back. I would like to call on the admiral myself."

They found Lord Cochrane much better and sitting up. The three Americans were received in the cabin at once.

"I am glad to meet you, Captain Downes," said the admiral cordially, after he had greeted Audrey, whom he found more charming than ever. "The information you gave us about the lights was of the utmost value."

"We are on your side, sir," said Captain Downes, "in fighting against the Spaniards. I wish I could have

joined in the mix-up myself. Your attack was a sight to stir the blood."

"You have seen service, I understand?"

"Yes, a little. I was a member of the *Essex* crew."

"Ah, that ship was gallantly fought, sir."

"Thank you, sir. Will your lordship give me leave? The cutting out of the *Esmeralda* was the most extraordinary exploit that has ever come under my notice. I do not believe any other seaman afloat would have attempted it, and I am sure no other seaman that ever lived could have brought it about."

"It was a neat bit of work, eh, Downes? And it was a neat bit of work to cut out the *Sharon*, too, and I trust you have no objection to her departure?"

"Objection?" laughed Downes. "I am so glad that the matter was settled as it was that I want to add my thanks to Captain Clough's."

"Don't mention it," said the admiral, his grim face lighting. "Well, Captain Clough, you have got everything you need?"

"Everything but one thing, sir. You have been more than generous. My owners, I am sure, will take proper notice of your lordship's unparalleled consideration and kindness."

"And what is the one thing you lack, sir?" questioned the admiral, with interest.

"A wife, sir!" was the amazing answer.

"A wife?"

"Yes, your lordship, a wife to accompany me on the long voyage home to New Bedford."

"Well, by Gad!" exclaimed Cochrane, staring from

the smiling young American to the smiling and blushing Audrey. "A wedding! By all means. And as I am incapacitated by that cursed Spanish bullet, damme (forgive me, little lady), we must have it here. Call my chaplain."

"Wait, your lordship," interposed Captain Downes, "the chaplain of your flagship is a Chilean, of course. Now, there is on the *Macedonian* an American chaplain. With your permission I shall send my boat for him."

"Have it your way, Downes," heartily said the admiral at once, "but I must have the privilege of giving away the bride."

"I shall be glad if your lordship will so honor me," said Audrey, simply, "but before we decide upon this there is one thing more."

"What is that, Miss Audrey?"

"I must be married under the American flag, sir."

"Is that all!" exclaimed Cochrane, smiling. "Captain Downes, have your chaplain fetch over all your spare colors. We'll dress ship and fly the American flag from every masthead."

Thus the matter was settled. The chaplain of the *Macedonian* was soon aboard the Chilean flagship. He brought some of her officers with him. The admiral had invited all his English subordinates into the cabin with some of the high ranking Chilean officers. Old Broadrib, who would fain have given the bride away himself, was there with Storey, Rice bemoaning the wound that prevented his presence. Captain Downes supported his former midshipman as best man.

The admiral toasted the bride in true seamanlike fashion after it was all over, in some rare old Madeira which had made half a dozen voyages with him.

As he bade his guests good-bye and wished them a safe and prosperous voyage home and through life, he handed Captain Clough a large and heavy parcel.

"I am glad to have helped you to your ship and wife, sir," he said. "I have had my steward make up a little parcel that I want you to accept with my compliments. There is something in it for each of you and especially for the bride, and I want you both to remember that if you ever need a friend and I can serve you I shall be glad to do so. When I have fought with, or against, a brave man I always love him, and I suppose I shall be flying a flag somewhere on the seven seas for some nation if not for my country," he continued a little bitterly, since his necessity for an alien service always rankled, "and where I am there will always be a commission and a command for you, Captain Clough, and for anyone you may bring with you."

"Thank you, sir," answered Captain Clough. "I shall remember that. Here's wishing your lordship as great success in the future as in the past. Good-bye, sir."

But Captain Downes and the bridal pair with the others of the *Macedonian* people were not to get away without further adventure. Captain Crosbie had ordered the yards manned, the marines paraded, and so, with every sea honor which they could share between them, they left the flagship.

Captain Downes put Clough on his own ship once

more. Sails were loosed and sheeted home, yards were braced, the American flag was hoisted and with a salute from the *O'Higgins*, the *Sharon* squared away before the fine fresh breeze then blowing for the long voyage down the west coast, around the Horn, up the east coast of South America for New Bedford, in the harbor of which famous whaling town four months after she dropped anchor after a voyage as uneventful as it had previously been exciting.

Admiral Cochrane's present to Captain Clough was a beautifully mounted Spanish sword, the best sword of Captain Cueto, which had been found in his cabin on the *Esmeralda*, together with a pair of ivory handled, silver mounted pistols of his own. He sent less elaborate weapons to Rice and Storey. To old Broadrib he gave a very beautiful silver bo's'n's call and, what pleased him immensely, a silver tobacco box, with a pipe and a big package of the very finest tobacco, both for chewing and smoking, in which the old salt took great solace. Audrey's present from the admiral was enclosed in a handsome silver-mounted box. When she opened it she saw a very beautiful pair of small pistols and between them a smaller parcel. That contained a woman's ring set with a diamond of rare brilliance. On a card the admiral had written these words:

The pistols are for the boy, Rey, who will know how to use them should there ever be need, which God forbid. The ring is one I designed to give to my wife. When I tell her Miss Audrey's story she will join with me in giving it to the brave and beautiful wife of my

good friend, Captain Benjamin Clough, with the good wishes of an old sailor — Dundonald.

All of the other gifts were accompanied by autographed letters from the admiral which made them infinitely more valuable.

The owners of the *Sharon*, who were wealthy and influential merchants, had nothing but praise for Captain Clough and his companions. They offered him the command of a brand new ship just ready to be launched, they gave third mates' positions to Rice and Storey.

The sailors who had worked the ship home received large presents, and the share of the salvage and lay apportioned among the survivors and those who had died in the discharge of duty was so great that Audrey for one, who was of course recognized as Captain Norris' heiress, felt like a rich woman, and that the foundation of her fortunes and that of her husband were now assured.

There was little they could do for old Broadrib, however, except give him his salvage and lay. He shipped in the first whaler bound south with a rigid promise that he should be landed at Valparaiso to rejoin his beloved admiral, for whom he carried a handsome piece of plate from the owners of the whaler, with grateful letters from all the Americans he had befriended; and what he prized above all, so that his wife vowed she was jealous of Audrey, the best miniature of the boy-lady that the best artistry of the country could produce. Admiral Cochrane was the only man Captain Clough would have permitted to have Audrey's picture. He could not be jealous of him!

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